

Statement of Need Final

St Michael le Belfrey, York

September 2022

SUMMARY



The 3 principles adopted at the outset of our project have been - *Honouring our Past, Resourcing our Future, Empowering our Vision.* This balance between our heritage and the needs of our present and future worshipping community has guided many previous alterations to St Michael le Belfrey (SMLB) Church over the past 500 years, and we see the project we are calling *Impact* as a further step in this evolutionary process.

The concept design preserves the bulk of the most significant features of the building - the interior structure dating from the eve of the Reformation; the (primarily medieval) stained glass and medieval pews; the eighteenth-century reredos, communion rail and Squire memorial; and the nineteenth century bell-tower, which needs to be extensively repaired. The design is intended to avoid any significant disturbance to the archaeology beneath the church or externally to the area around York Minster in which the church has a central location. References to the significance of the features which are subject to alteration in the reordering are explained in more detail in the Statement of Significance.

The cost of repairs to the existing fabric, including a new roof, is amounting to 30% of the entire project. It is very unlikely that funding of this magnitude could have been obtained without a concurrent major reordering proposal to deliver the future vision for the church and to motivate the congregation to stay together for a lengthy closure period during construction.

The concept design is an integral whole, in which the various elements combine to meet our requirements. Accessibility throughout the church; a larger, lighter, welcome area; flexibility of space including meeting spaces; maintaining seating capacity of c550 people; the provision of better facilities including toilets; and quality technology are key elements of the reordering; alongside a new full immersion baptism pool. These needs are described more fully in Section 2 and linked with the features of each of the project Proposals described in Section 3; and with each individual alteration of the building as set out in the Statement of Significance.

However, it is vital that the linkages which enable the overall design to deliver the overall client requirements continue to be borne in mind.

This final Statement of Need reflects a 3 year process of consultation and subsequent revisions to the project with key stakeholders, including the sub committee of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), Historic England and amenity societies, York Minster and City of York Council.



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VICAR's Foreword

The parish church of St Michael le Belfrey in York needs repairing and reordering. Not only has no significant work been done on the building for 150 years, but life, worship, mission and ministry are now very different, and the church needs to reflect this changing cultural and missiological landscape. So it's time for work to be done. This is a significant and responsible task, which is costly in terms of time, energy and resources. But we are not daunted, as we believe that God has called us to do this, and do it well - not just for ourselves but for future generations too.

As we've made plans for this reordering in recent years, our knowledge and understanding of the history of our building has grown. We have a greater appreciation not only of its place in York, but also in the North of England and in the region's ecclesiastical and social history. For example, developments between 1771 and 1821 all took place under the fifty year incumbency of William Richardson, who filled the nave and gallery with his clear bible preaching. Richardson helped establish a series of social action ministries in the city and was renowned for visiting prisoners and caring for those in poverty. With Henry Venn, Richardson was a founding member of the Elland Society which supported young ordinands in the north.

As we seek to be a church that in the 21st Century similarly serves our city and the North, we find inspirational models not just in the 18th Century, but as far back as the 7th Century - in the establishment and growth of northern monasteries. When St Aidan came to Lindisfarne in AD 635 he established it as a centre of mission, prayer and education for the locality and region. From there the North of England began to be transformed. Part of Aidan's strategy involved developing leaders and planting or replanting new monastic communities which would then influence their locality and similarly send out missional leaders. One leader who did this so well was Hilda. In AD 647 Hilda was sent from Lindisfarne, first to begin a new community in Monkwearmouth, but soon moved to Hartlepool to revitalise a community in Tadcaster before finally settling in Whitby, where she pioneered a brand new monastery for which she is best known. These communities were not contemplative inward-looking convents, but rather were entrepreneurial worshipping centres of innovative vision, vibrant life and artistic culture. In many ways they were rather like so-called 'resource churches' today - with a vision to become strong communities of mission and ministry, regularly sending out strategic leaders to impact their locality and region.

Thus our visionary paradigm for reordering the resource church of St Michael le Belfrey is not a new model, but an old one - an ancient one. It's rooted in the history of the North, and being revived today in a building whose pre-history probably stretches back close to this early monastic period.

We hope to reorder St Michael le Belfrey really well. We want to honour our past, returning some aspects back to how they were when this new 16th Century building was first constructed. But we also want to carefully and helpfully introduce the best of 21st Century technology into the building, showing that the old and new can co-exist beautifully and practically together. This was surely one reason why UNESCO chose the ancient city of York to become the UK's first City of Digital Media, and so it will be an honour to model this well for our city. We believe that our building can continue to function well in the 21st Century and beyond - not just as a museum, but as a servant-hearted resource church for York and the North.



1. GENERAL INFORMATION & FINANCE

This should provide an overview of the parish and the current use of the building

The mission of The Belfrey is to serve God's Transformation of the North through our five key aims: Serving York; Making Disciples; Nurturing Disciples; Developing Leaders; and Planting Churches.

The people of St Michael le Belfrey are a vibrant gathered church community with an average of 500+ weekly worshippers, ranging from babies to nonagenarians, and a significant student congregation. Our Mission Initiative, G2 is a former church plant which has now evolved into a separate church worshipping in the Tang Hall area of the city and includes another 200 people. It is still part of our church for governance purposes. Our worship centre is St Michael le Belfrey Church (SMLB) and is situated in the city centre, adjacent to York Minster with worshippers from across the city and beyond to worship.

The Belfrey (as our church family is often called) has been designated a Resource Church by the Diocese of York and the Church of England. This means we have a responsibility to plant new churches in the Diocese and region, provide leadership training and development to help make those plants happen and, with the size of our church family and skills we have at our disposal, to share those generously and work in partnership with other churches in the region. This is part of working towards our vision to serve God's transformation of the North. In 2019 we helped plant St Thomas' Church, Newcastle with the Diocese of Newcastle, sending a curate and team to establish a new congregation. In January 2022 we sent a team to Holy Trinity (and St Wulstan) in Heworth, York to help renew and grow the worshipping community.

On a weekly basis The Belfrey holds three Sunday services, a Wednesday lunchtime service, prayer meetings, Belfrey Groups and runs a dynamic community programme across ages groups, and for those who are isolated and marginalised, throughout the week. During the COVID pandemic, the church introduced live streaming of services, online activities and audio links for Belfrey Groups to reach our church community and beyond. We estimated around 1000 people viewed the services on a weekly basis and we have continued to livestream some services and activities post lockdown.

For many years The Belfrey has been one of the largest parish contributors to Diocesan funds in line with its value of generosity, and recognises this is vital to continue so that other churches with limited means can be supported to share the Christian faith in their parish.

Parish: St Michael le Belfrey with St Cuthbert Dedication: St Michael le Belfrey Benefice: St Michael le Belfrey Diocese: York Local Planning Authority: York (Unitary Authority) National Grid Reference: SE 60279 52128

Statutory Listing of church:

Heritage Category: Listing Building, Grade: 1, List entry number: 1257228, First listed: 14 Jun 1954 Statutory Address: Church of St Michael le Belfrey, High Petergate, York YO1 7EN For full listing details go to: <u>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1257228</u>

Statutory designation for structures and objects within churchyard: None

Conservation Area: York Minster Scheduled Monument: Land to North and West of church in Minster Neighbourhood Area Tree Preservation Orders: N/A Protected Species: N/A County Wildlife Site (or equivalent, or SSSI): N/A Any other designations:

How many people live in the parish/ village/ town?

As a city centre parish the number of residents is small. There are approximately 550 people resident in the area surrounding SMLB with further housing opposite St Cuthbert's Church, The Belfrey's 'House of Prayer'. There are a large number of shops and businesses in the parish including local council and national government bodies. Nearly all of its members reside outside the parish as the church attracts people from across York and beyond.

The electoral roll was refreshed in 2019 and at the start of 2021 had 432 registered. SMLB is in contact with c900 people via its database.

What is the age profile of the congregation? - Newborn-90 years

| 0-11 | 58 |
|-------|-----|
| 12-17 | 92 |
| 18-29 | 280 |
| 30-44 | 136 |
| 45-64 | 173 |
| 65+ | 182 |

| Current Church Worship and Commun | nity Programme |
|--|---|
| Sunday - average attendance ¹ | |
| 9am Morning Worship: | 108 |
| 11am Family Worship (all age) | 169 |
| 6pm Contemporary Evening Worship | 242 |
| Total | 509 |
| (average for largest 5% of Church of | England churches ² is ² |

Wednesday

| 12:30pm Lunchtime service | |
|---------------------------|--|
| (includes a weekly café) | |

While Sunday worship is important to us, our February 2020 church survey showed that on most Sundays only 50% of our regular worshippers are present, which means that our church community is larger than figures represented in average attendance.

69

149)

Monday to Saturday

9:30amMonday Staff Prayers & Worship venue varies7am and 9amTuesday prayer meetings at House of Prayer (St Cuthberts)9amPrayer meeting Thursday at House of PrayerLunchtimeTuesday prayer meeting at ChurchCentral Prayer meeting meets twice termlyBelfrey Groups x 45 - meet midweek for a programme of bible study, prayer and social activities.

¹ 2019 Attendance figures, St Michael le Belfrey church records

² Church of England Research and Statistics Team: Statistics for Mission 2017 Report



Children and Young people

Approximately 50 children and young people attend children and youth work on a Sunday. The numbers of children involve an extensive range of children's groups and use different sized spaces in the Parish Centre (no. 12 Minster Yard) and the Belfrey Hall to deliver effective teaching.

100 children and young people meet mid-week using the portfolio of buildings including Tuesday mornings for early years. (Average for midweek children's activities in largest 5% of Church of England churches³ is 35).

Students

The Belfrey employs a Student Worker and values its interns who work with students attending the church services and go out on campus at York St John University and the University of York, mentoring, delivering bible studies, Alpha courses and other activities through the year at both the campuses and using the church building. We have up to 120 students attend during the academic year, 80+ who have attended teaching/social weekends away and 42 students take part in Belfrey Groups.

Interns

Young people aged 18-25 years spend a year with The Belfrey on the New Wine Discipleship programme and a second year Leadership Development stream was launched in 2019. Young adults are given a day's teaching and training each week and then work 16 hours per week across The Belfrey's Ministries and supporting the Sunday services. In 2021/2022 The Belfrey supported 10 Interns despite recruitment challenges with the pandemic, with 14 just started in 2022/23 academic year.

Seniors

A team works with older people in the church providing a mixture of discipling, prayer and social programme. There is an intergenerational bible study of seniors and students.

Vulnerable and Disadvantaged

On Thursday afternoons, the 'Never Give Up' group has met at the Belfrey Hall providing a meal and practical and pastoral support to an average of 35 people in the city who are homeless and/or vulnerable. The team is currently running a series of 'Let's Cook' courses for smaller groups of people to help them learn new skills in a safe space, improve their nutrition and provide pastoral support.

Throughout recent decades, people who have worshipped at The Belfrey have gone on to set up, run or support charities that focus on the elderly, the isolated and the marginalised; these people have been equipped in part through the teaching, worship and nurture the church has provided. Examples include *Restore*, *Acts 435*, *York Neighbours*, *Besom* and *Bundles of Joy*.

We care deeply about the community of York and in 2021 The Belfrey launched its Social Action Programme, working in partnership with a range of charities and other organisations to offer support to people who are disadvantaged, particularly families and young people, those in poverty and struggling with mental health.

What other activities happen in the church?

³ Church of England Research and Statistics Team: Statistics for Mission 2017 Report



- Cafes run on a regular basis, hosted by some of the *Belfrey Doors* teams, as a focus on seasonal celebrations and City events. This is an area the church wishes to expand. The 2021 Christmas cafes ran over two Saturdays and attracted 1000+ people at each event
- We participate in and support 'Make it York' events, including the York Marathon, and art exhibitions as well as hosting a local theatre company Riding Lights
- The Yorkshire Bach Choir uses the church for at least termly performances
- Regular requests to book the building are received for weddings and a variety of events, sacred and secular

Welcoming Visitors

Approximately 3k people visit the church building each month (during summer holidays 2022, we welcomed c5k visitors) with our heritage and city centre location making the church popular with visitors. The church is staffed by teams of volunteers and aims to open Monday-Saturday for part days and Sunday afternoons. Points of interest include the registering of Guy Fawkes' birth and baptism, the medieval stained glass, and the memorial stones and ledgers. It provides a great opportunity to talk about the Christian faith in the context of SMLB's heritage.

The church is adjacent to York Minster which often encourages visitors to walk into SMLB having toured around the Minster. Now that SMLB is part of the Minster Precinct Neighbourhood, we hope more opportunities for collaboration across worship, training and resourcing and welcoming visitors will be possible.

Finance & Fundraising

The church's operational budget for 2021 was £760,000. 71% of the income comes from congregational giving, including Gift Aid recovery. The rest of the income is a variety of one-off gifts given through the year or from previous years, visitor donations from having our church doors open to the public free of charge, and hiring out the church and church hall for community events, concerts and weddings. The Belfrey owns 3 properties in the City; 2 residential properties and the Belfrey Hall.

In 2021 we gave away 24% of our total budget towards our Diocesan freewill offering and another 9% towards our global mission partners, local missionaries and charities and other outreach activities. The rest of the budget is allocated over the following areas (including relevant salary costs): Building Maintenance and Utilities 15%; Admin & Tech support 14%; Children, Youth, Students, 18-30s 16%; Music, Worship, Prayer & Congregations 14%; Interns & Training 8%.

In 2019-2020 substantial financial support was provided to St Lawrence's Church in York in the form of donations and cost underwriting to help with the restoration of the Denman organ. Originally located in St Michael le Belfrey Church, the organ was dismantled in summer 2019, restored by Nicholson & Co, rebuilt at St Lawrence in autumn 2020 and used for Christmas 2020.

In March 2017, The Belfrey was given a donation of £1.1m restricted towards the reordering of St Michael le Belfrey Church and a further restricted donation of £200k received in September 2018. These donations allowed The Belfrey to hire a Project Manager, create a fundraising strategy and campaign with the help of a fundraising consultant, and hold a RIBA design competition to select an Architect and design team. In January 2020 The Belfrey announced it had received a significant gift of £5.9m towards the Impact Project. The gift is being provided in instalments over the stages of the project with 3 instalments now received.

The Fundraising campaign launches in October 2022. We expect that 30% of the build cost will be spent on repairs and fabric renewal which would not be possible without the donations for the



Reordering part of the project. The Belfrey is aware that once the project is complete, some operational costs will be higher than before in order to maintain the reordered building, although this will be offset by the reduction of cost in other areas and venue hire opportunities.

The Fundraising Strategy identifies the following key methods for raising the required funds:

- Church members and those with a Belfrey connection request for additional giving over a period of c3 years
- Major Grants including Trusts, Donors and Corporate Fundraising
- Sale of property
- York Minster's Chancel repair liability
- Community Fundraising

In addition, The Belfrey should recover 80-85% of the VAT incurred through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. Please see Appendix G Fundraising Campaign Plan v5 for more detail.

2. WHAT DO YOU NEED?



The Belfrey developed a Client Requirements document (see Appendix A) in 2018 and the key priorities outlined were:

- Structural repair works completed as identified in the Quinquennial report
- Lighter, more spacious and inviting Welcome
- Flexible use of internal space for Worship and maintain capacity to seat at least 600 (now revised to 550+ recognising this will be sufficient and allows us to mitigate the potential harm that could have been caused in earlier concept designs)

• Meetings rooms for children's work, prayer and pastoral work (taking into consideration consultations, this is a requirement that cannot be met in the Church building and has now been factored into 12 Minster Yard along with a Vestry).

- Accommodating facilities for baptism by full immersion for infants and adults
- Increase capacity and accessibility of toilets including changing area
- Accessibility in all its forms

• Quality technology facilities consistent with the flexible layout of the church building These priorities were used to help prepare the Client brief for the RIBA design competition (Appendix B).

- **I.Structural repair works** completed as identified in the Quinquennial reports Fabric renewal is significant (as identified in the 2014 and 2019 reports see Appendix C) and includes the requirement for a new roof, rebuild of the bell tower, external and internal stonework repairs and internal redecoration. Following a recent survey of the stained glass, the project board has now included the cost of the necessary repairs and protection to make the stained glass robust enough for the future.
- **II.Lighter, more spacious and inviting Welcome** an exterior which is sympathetic with its surroundings and improves the welcome into the church. A welcome area which is light, spacious and acts as a transition space for those considering whether to attend church and a visitor/holding space during service times for those who may wish to talk to someone but not attend a Worship service. A space for signposting services and displaying resources. Reduction of congestion due to the entrance being used as a pram park and managing large events held in the church where the one entrance becomes overcrowded and poses a health and safety risk. Installation of a heating system which improves the welcome for all those using the church.

III.Flexible use of internal space and the capacity to seat at least 550+

- Different configurations of seating and facility to clear the ground floor for some activities
- Sunday Children's groups informal spaces in the church and rooms in 12 Minster Yard to deliver groups safely, improve safeguarding and peace of mind for their families.
- Children and young people's work as part of their termly programme.
- Prayer stations & Prayer ministry
- Communion stations
- Church in the round
- Café zone which can also accommodate café church and a place for meetings
- Wednesday service and fellowship lunch
- Messy Church
- Opportunity for Senior Club activity
- Big seasonal services such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest; large services for baptisms, weddings, funerals; and guest speaker services
- Training and Leadership Development spaces to host and deliver training events, conferences and courses with a variety of configurations and break out spaces



- Events and Entertainment space which can host concerts, musical events, theatre, art and digital media exhibitions
- Better sightlines for people taking part in services and events whether seated on the ground floor or gallery
- **IV.Accommodating facilities for baptism by full immersion for infants and adults** facilities which support the current number of full immersion baptisms and affirmations with room for growth both for The Belfrey and for other churches and Christians living in the York area.
- V.Increase capacity and accessibility of toilets including changing area for those with access needs, physical and learning, families with young children and those with particular health conditions. It improves safeguarding, health and safety.
- VI.Accessibility in all its forms Consideration given to those physical access and learning access needs and particular health needs such as dementia. Flexibility to create break out spaces for young children and those with sensory impairment.

Level access throughout the building giving people the freedom to use all areas including the gallery. Families with buggies, wheelchair users or people with mobility impairment can choose where to sit rather than being given designated seating.

VII.High quality audio-visual and lighting facilities, consistent with flexible church layout - supports worship, a leadership development programme and serves the city of York.

PLUS

- **Central Staging** improves sightlines for congregation and Service leaders. It needs to work for Sunday and weekly worship, weekly programme, training and external hire
- Storage for chairs and tables, A/V, instruments, resources and literature
- Services including more effective, consistent heating system and application of sustainable practices that contribute to a net zero carbon footprint
- Acoustics that offer an optimum quality for concerts, training and other events

3. THE PROPOSALS



Fabric renewal - SMLB recognises the value of understanding the current state of the infrastructure and the breadth of fabric repairs required as early as possible to inform design development. A series of surveys have now been undertaken including:

- Full measured survey
- GPR survey to get an initial assessment of below ground layout
- Stained Glass assessment both in terms of repair and preservation and its historical significance
- Assessment of the 18thC staircases both in terms of safety and their historical significance
- Assessment of the wall memorial and ledger stones for repair and preservation
- Ecology survey & updates which did not detect bats and bird activity
- Structural survey using drone footage to understand the extent of the repairs
- Asbestos refurbishment survey
- Roof timber condition and floor damp investigation
- Repair and restoration of the historic free-standing pews
- A design for the roof scaffold to understand the most appropriate structure to allow the roof to be replaced without harming the existing fabric
- Acoustic survey assessing impact of reordering upon building's acoustic properties
- CCTV and Drainage
- Investigative works including trial pits, roof opening up core stone analysis

Fabric repairs identified include the replacement of the nave and aisle roofs; external and internal masonry repairs; repair of the bell turret; repair of the stained glass and preservation of the medieval glass; preservation of wall memorials, monuments and ledger stones which are in Priority A and B requiring immediate and early repair.

This addresses the client requirements to undertake urgent fabric repairs.

Exterior

- creating level access by raising the floor through the church to west end entrance and external landscaping with further gentle gradient consumed within and complementing York Minster's proposed Queen's Square development
- shallow steps to north and south perimeters of property bounded at the end with bench seating setting the building within Queen's Square but distinctive as St Michael le Belfrey
- modest LED lighting to highlight the building entrance and Bell turret
- two new openings subservient to the main entrance at the west end façade which complementing architectural features of the west window and reflect the three door entrance of the west end of York Minster
- introduction of bike rack, bin store to entrance area of 12 Minster Yard at east end of building and modest LED lighting to encourage cycling and walking by staff and discourage rubbish and antisocial behaviour

This addresses the client requirements of accessibility and a warm welcome

West End welcome area (Narthex)

- removal of the existing screen in the Narthex
- glazed doors for the two new openings doors in the west end façade
- new servery with better facilities created from the structure of the new gallery
- one accessible toilet to the south of the entrance and one oversized toilet to the north of the entrance (allowing for the boiler room)



• larger floor space which can incorporate a meeting space and support maximum capacity events

This addresses the client requirements of a warm welcome, accessibility, flexibility of space ensures that 550+ seating capacity can be provided for larger events and much needed meeting space. It reduces congestion, improves the movement and safety of people.

First floor Gallery

Replacement of existing gallery with new contemporary design that allows space at the north west and south west aisles improving the view from east to west of the columns and the spatial qualities of the interior, presently diminished by the existing gallery. Use of wood, glass and other materials which lighten the impact of the gallery on the interior of the church and the welcome space below. It will contain more comfortable seating for at least 100 people retractable seating for the front half to create a second meeting space.

This addresses the **client requirements of retaining capacity and flexible space including the need for meeting spaces**. It directly addresses points raised by Historic England regarding the impact upon the spatial qualities of the interior and the reduced/altered view of the medieval stained glass.

New staircases and lift

Removal of existing staircases and introduction of new staircases will be health and safety and fire compliant, improving access to the gallery, making it quicker and more effective for people to enter and exit the gallery. The installation of a lift will mean the gallery is accessible to people with disabilities, particularly those with mobility and visual impairments, and their families/carers. It will provide the user with dignity, independence ie the lift can be used by someone on their own, and space for at least two people including a wheelchair user.

This addresses the **client requirements of accessibility** as well as health and safety.

Ground floor space and removal of pews

Removal of the fixed nave and fixed collegiate pews and introduction of moveable stacking chairs. Restore and retain the historic free-standing pews.

This addresses the **client requirements of flexibility of space** to provide different forms of worship, expand the range of events and activities that can be offered across all age groups, improves **accessibility** and makes it possible to introduce the underfloor heating system.

New Floor & New Heating system

The new level floor surface proposed is magnesian limestone and can accommodate the ledger stones, Mensa stone, a full immersion baptism pool and underfloor heating on a bed of limecrete. It addresses early concerns raised by the Diocese of using a wooden floor with the maintenance and durability issues involved.

The new heating system will use a combination of underfloor heating sourced by an air source heat pump and supplemented by wall mounted radiators sourced by a gas boiler. (Careful consideration was given to an electric boiler but the operating costs are still too significant at this point in time).

This addresses the client requirements for flexibility of space, accessibility, capacity and providing a warm welcome while significantly reducing carbon emissions as well as ensuring durability.



Baptism Pool

The location of this full immersion baptism pool is just east of the Mensa stone and in the centre of the nave. It will be hydraulically operated and provide an accessible alternative to baptism by sprinkling. A moveable sprinkling font will sit on top of the pool cover and moved when required.

The **client requirement for a full immersion font is addressed** and follows Canon law of having one point of baptism in the building.

More toilets

Five new toilets will be provided in total. Two accessible toilets - one at the west end and one at the east end in the 'link area' (the current vestry). One oversized toilet at the west end and two gender neutral toilets at the east end in the link area.

This addresses the concern raised from the Church Buildings Council about the safeguarding risk around inappropriate use of toilets and still meets the client requirement of better amenities, accessibility, their own safeguarding concerns and improving the welcome.

New Servery

Provided through the creation of a new gallery and allowing sufficient clearance in the entrance area. This location is much better for providing refreshments across a range of events and will service a café zone at the west end of the church more effectively.

It addresses client requirements for a better facility, warmer welcome, improved accessibility and health and safety.

Storage

The gallery design works hard to provide storage space under the staircases and on the first floor so that equipment and tables can be stored. Storage units are proposed along the north east (one of which fits the drumkit and staging panel) and south east walls which can store musical instruments and AV equipment, chairs and resources. A further storage area is proposed at the east end to include overflow of chairs when needing completely clear floor space.

It addresses the concern raised by the Church Buildings Council over sufficient storage space.

Technology

- The media desk will be mobile so it can work in a number of locations with a plug and play facility to manage different staging and seating configurations and a variety of events
- One large retractable screen is proposed for the nave area which can retract into the ceiling area. Four TV monitors will be located on columns two and three (from the east end) for viewing at the side. They sit flat against the columns when not in use, minimising the view in the nave and from west to east to the Reredos
- Array speakers and point speakers will be located on columns two and three either side of the nave to provide the best mix of sound across the church
- PTZ cameras appear on second columns for livestreaming
- Motorised blinds across the clerestory and west windows will help manage light levels during the year and times of day

This addresses the **client requirement for quality up to date technology** that will have a level of built in obsolescence, supports need for flexibility and expands range of activities delivered.

Staging



Modular staging has been designed with a central section of 6 panels which contains cabling to plug into floor boxes. It can be extended with further panels, one section of which will be bespoke to fit around the curved communion rail and altar steps. Some panels can be stored including the panel with drumkit which goes into a bespoke storage area. A portable hydraulic platform lift can be stored under the gallery. The rest of the staging will be moved to the south east side when not in use, keeping a clear view of the nave.

The staging meets the **client requirements for flexibility of space**, **enhancing worship** and improving The Belfrey's offer as a city centre venue. It improves sightlines for those attending and addresses the concern of keeping the church clear and minimising clutter.

New stained glass

The creation of a newly designed stained glass window in the North East of the building, will use a legacy left by former Church member and Master Glazier, Peter Gibson. Peter Gibson, over many years managed the stained glass windows of both St Michael le Belfrey and York Minster, including helping to remove and preserve them during WWII. The Belfrey intends to commission Helen Whitaker at Barley Studios and will submit a separate faculty application in early 2023.

New entrance in North East Wall - this will provide easy access to adjacent meetings rooms required for children and young people's work on Sundays and support mid week programme across a range of activities. It provides level access between the Church building and 12 Minster Yard with the help of a Flexstep and easier access to toilet facilities

Meetings Rooms & Vestry - to meet the client requirement for more meeting rooms and respecting the need to preserve the spatial qualities of the church building, the proposal is to use **12 Minster Yard** - currently used as part of The Belfrey's offices.

The development will provide three repurposed meeting rooms - two on the ground floor and fully accessible. The front office will also work as a Creche and Pastoral space. The rear office will provide a new Vestry. The first floor rear office will be reconfigured to provide a larger space, restoring it to its original layout. It offers an improvement in the safety and safeguarding for children, young people and vulnerable adults as well as providing facilities for conferences and events.

Discussions have taken place with York Minster Chapter to agree Heads of Terms including a long lease of 50 years and 'no reversion' clause to recognise the investment taking place. space. New tenancy agreements will be drawn up late 2022/early 2023.

In the 2011 Conservation Management Plan a number of policies were proposed:

POLICY 5:

Maintain the visual connection between St Michael le Belfrey and York Minster and seek to retain the open space to the west.

The Belfrey has consulted with Minster Fabric Advisory Committee over the last three years as well as and other key stakeholders to keep them informed of progress, seek advice and comment. The Conservation Areas Advisory Committee minutes extract from November 2021 meeting said: "The Panel had no major objection to the elements of the scheme which would require planning approval, ie the alterations to the West Front or the works to 12 Minster Yard." The Fabric Advisory Committee's minutes extract from the Secretary David Demack notes; "the York Minster FAC instructed me to inform you that, in principle, it accepted the design of the three



proposed openings at the west end of the church, but would defer to the other regulatory authorities on their detail."

POLICY 10:

Particularly significant fabric or principal elevations and key areas should not be altered with the exception of necessary repair work or work with a clear and demonstrable heritage / cultural significance gain that resolves serious vulnerabilities at the site or is required to meet current legislation.

The revised plans and images being resubmitted have given very careful consideration to retention of significant fabric and the revised plans and visuals show the changes made to mitigate some of the 'harm' seen to be proposed to the fabric while still meeting client requirements and improving accessibility to all.

POLICY 11:

Investigate the seating within the church building as part of a re-ordering scheme.

A number of design modifications were considered regarding retention of 18thC gallery seating and collegiate pews. The compromises presented hindered our requirements for flexibility and were felt to be impractical and aesthetically unpleasing. The design has now returned to the original plan of removing all pews on the ground floor, replacing all pews in the gallery with new seating, while preserving the medieval free-standing benches. A strategy for the removal and reuse or recycling of materials from the interior of the church, including the pews, has started. In December 2021 Historic England dropped their objection to the removal of the collegiate pews, recognising the consultation and compromises undertaken.

POLICY 14:

All works to the building will be based on a sound understanding of the church and its significance.

Further careful research examining the Statements of Need and Significance, a series of consultations including a workshop on the gallery, additional surveys and modifications to the design has been taken throughout 2020. The earlier research of the church wardens accounts and faculties during the Church's history demonstrates that SMLB is a living dynamic church that undertook a series of modifications to reflect the cultural context and changing worship pattern over a 300 year period. Since the 1970s a new church has grown once again and now, after considering reordering for nearly 50 years, has the financial resource to make these works possible. Again, in their letter dated December 2021, Historic England dropped their objection to the removal of the gallery recognising that all other options had been explored.



4. WHY DO YOU NEED IT? AND WHY DO YOU NEED IT NOW?

The present building is a beautiful 16th century church but arranged for 19th century worship which has a restrictive influence in the worship and mission of the church today. Decisions taken on the content and execution of services and non-liturgical events have been dictated by the rigid layout of the building, the dark, cramped entrance, and lack of facilities.

As churches and cathedrals have adapted through the ages, it is time for us to meet the needs of the day and make the church building accessible to people in this century in a way that they can understand and engage.

As a city centre church with a large and increasing footfall of thousands of people and visitors, the church has a unique opportunity for mission. Rather than living locally, like many parish churches, The Belfrey is mainly a gathered church, where people connect and assemble from outside the parish. This affects how people engage and participate in church across the week and our mission to the city and region.

The Diocese of York's strategy has 3 priorities, one of which is to 'Reach people we currently don't' and a key way to meet this priority is through their *Multiply* programme. The Belfrey is the Resource Church for the Diocese of York and is directly responsible for delivering key parts of the Multiply programme. The focus is upon those in their 20s, 30s and 40s. 30% of The Belfrey's membership is aged 18-29 years and a further 15% aged 30-44 years which stands out among the demographic profile of Church of England churches. The Belfrey's strong bible teaching, contemporary worship (and an enduring reputation) alongside its Intern and Student ministries helps to consolidate community among that demographic. It is an area we can sustain and grow through a reordered space and investment in the latest technology.

There is a correlation between that age group showing a particular interest in developing as leaders and planting churches, two of The Belfrey's key aims, and the church plants in Newcastle and Heworth, York demonstrating that demographic in their leadership teams.

The Belfrey is in the largest 5% of Church of England churches in England and for some time has flourished despite, rather than supported by, its facilities. In 2011 the PCC started to consider a reordering and repair project but was halted, partly by the lack of finances. However, following a study of options to locate elsewhere, the church family at the time strongly believed in the value of remaining in this building and believed this is where God needs them to worship and serve.

Recognising these issues and through the design response referred to above we believe we can *Honour our Past, Resource our Future and Empower our Vision* through the following:

- Generate a greater sense of welcome and hospitality with a fully accessible church
- Offer new styles of worship, administer communion more easily, publicly celebrate baptisms among all ages, and offer prayer spaces/support 6 days per week⁴ which attracts those seeking and new to Christianity
- Opportunity for our programme to expand and new activities to develop
- Provide a permanent Café zone open to all
- Intentional investment in Leadership Development
- Deliver more effectively the Diocesan and national mandate of being a Resource Church
- Create a better visitor experience and encourage them to stay longer

⁴ 6 days a week is seen as realistic as it gives a day for staff to rest, regular cleaning and preparation of the building



- Offer the building as a hub for social action, community partnership and signposting to services for the vulnerable and marginalised in the city
- Offer the building and technology as a creative arts space for the city and region
- Share the building and baptism pool for use among Christians in the area
- Complete well the schedule of fabric repairs originally identified in 2014

The Impact project clearly supports The Belfrey's 5 Year Road Map⁵ and its key aims - Serving York, Making Disciples, Nurturing Disciples, Development Leaders and Planting Churches.

Structural repair works

Maintains the infrastructure of the building, improves its interior and external appearance, ensures safety of people using the building and its future sustainability. The Belfrey needs to look after the building well so that future generations can also enjoy using, visiting and getting the most from the building.

Exterior

The proposed external landscaping, which creates an accessible entrance is much more inviting and the additional door openings, will improve the flow of people into and around the building. The west end landscaping creates an accessible between a beautiful public space and an attractive welcoming church building and increases opportunities for outdoor worship.

Lighter, more spacious and inviting Welcome

The Belfrey wants to attract more visitors to look around its beautiful, historic building and encourage them to stay longer. Currently, the building is dark and brooding with the one relatively small entrance at the west; the dark wood Narthex screen reducing the view into the church (and has created safeguarding issues); the seating is dark, rigid and inflexible; the toilets are inaccessible and display space is limited. The current heating system is not easy to regulate and average visitor time is only 10 minutes.

The entrance (Narthex) is the area where people think about whether to join in worship or an activity or whether they leave again. An open welcoming entrance can encourage more conversations and gives people the option to linger.

We care deeply about the community of York and through our Social Action programme, launched in 2021, we work in partnership with a range of charities and other organisations to offer support to people who are disadvantaged, particularly families and young people, those in poverty and struggling with mental health. The reordered building will work as a place to signpost people to specific activities and as a community hub to welcome people in and minister to them.

Flexibility of space

A church which can have large or small spaces, a variety of seating arrangements and space to stand means more styles of worship and activities can be incorporated, as listed in 'What is the Need'. The church building cannot be used midweek by many of the Belfrey activities, as 90% of the floor space is covered by fixed pews. For example, opportunities to collaborate with York Minster for Christmas events could be extended if The Belfrey has a large space in which to operate cafes and certain events that complement York Minster's programme. Messy Church is a great activity for welcoming new people and families to church but requires open space to allow for craft, fun, physical activities, prayer and café.

⁵ See new section 8 The Belfrey's 5 Year Road Map and why the reordered space is critical to its success



The removal of the Organ has shown in a small way how that additional square of space has helped by providing an informal play space for small children on Sundays, while the families can still take part in the services.

Discretionary space - many people enter our church building both during the week and at weekends. Many like to sit quietly for prayer. Others receive prayer, and value doing so in a restful and discreet space, others seek counsel. Meeting spaces on the gallery and ground floor, more flexible ground floor space and a café zone allows meetings, conversations and more informal support sessions to take place easily.

Prayer ministry - currently takes place during or after services in the only open space, in the chancel. As well as congestion, praying at the front can be off putting because it is so public. Prayer stations around the church on the ground floor and the new gallery can be made available all week, not just Sunday.

Bottlenecks

During Communion, congregations have to funnel up to the front and down the sides. Communion stations around the sides of the church would improve the accessibility to and administering of communion. The Wednesday café following the lunchtime service is very congested and takes place in the chancel, with a queue to get sandwiches and restricted access to tables. The two toilets, neither of which are accessible, generate regular queues into the chancel with one narrow, dimly lit corridor to pass one another.

Seasonal cafes and events desperately need larger spaces to welcome hundreds of people, reduce long queues, improve health and safety and most importantly the quality of the experience.

Café Zone - cafés are currently provided ad hoc in the chancel with inadequate serving facilities. A café zone with a servery will enhance the visitor experience; build relationships with people; provide a worship and café space for businesses and residents; and increase stay times.

The café will support the informal lunch following the Wednesday service as it will be accessible, easier to serve, and more attractive to use which should encourage an increase in attendance.

Services in the round - this would work for different sizes of congregation but is not possible to execute effectively with the present arrangement of pews. Numbers would be compromised. There is a great opportunity to celebrate communion where people can gather all the way around the communion table. Breaking bread and sharing fellowship formally within communion and more informally at social occasions has a critical place in the life of the church. The practical act strengthens the community of the church, the sense of belonging that people have and helps them to grow in their faith. The current approach to the front is restricted and inflexible, reducing opportunities for fellowship in many styles of worship.

Children and Youth Work - has to take place elsewhere with children of primary school age currently walking through crowded streets to the Belfrey Hall on Stonegate which has caused some significant safeguarding challenges. This can put some families off from attending and makes it difficult to welcome new families who are not used to letting 'strangers' take their children to a different site.

Children aged 2-5 years have to go outside to the Parish centre (11 & 12 Minster Yard) through two sets of heavy doors up a steep staircase to the only meeting room. Toilets are up another flight of even less accessible stairs, especially for toddlers going through toilet training. Some children in the group have disabilities and have to be carried. Meeting rooms and spaces within



the church building and 12 Minster Yard will provide a safer, more flexible, accessible environment and give Parents and Carers peace of mind.

In 2020 the lease ended on a building The Belfrey was using for youth, children and early years' activities such as Song Stars. During lockdown it has been able to livestream youth church from the building but children and youth work still need flexible spaces and facilities to support the delivery of their mid-week programme.

Social Action - The Belfrey is keen to work with local charities and organisations to address particular needs within the community around mental health, families and homelessness. This area of community engagement can be enhanced with flexible spaces and improved facilities acting as a city centre hub and signposting to other support services.

Capacity

With a newly reordered building, a regular café zone and the opportunity to expand current programme and deliver new initiatives, capacity is expected to grow at each service and across the week to 2000+ users (currently about 1000) in a 5 year time period.

Leadership development - SMLB is a Resource Church but cannot host large scale conferences, training events and courses such as Alpha where break out spaces are required. For a number of years, The Belfrey has worked closely with New Wine, a Christian network of 2000+ churches, sharing expertise in areas including worship, children and youth work. The Belfrey would like to offer itself as a regional training centre to Christian organisations if it had the flexible space alongside the capacity. Maintaining the capacity of the building and providing a new contemporary, comfortable gallery with informal meeting space will improve the experience, as well as practicalities of running training conferences and events.

Accommodating adult baptism

Full immersion baptism, as a public declaration to mark a person's commitment to the Christian faith, has been an important part of The Belfrey's ministry for many years and so investment in a permanent facility is considered a priority. Not only is this the historic practice of the church and encouraged in the Book of Common Prayer but also it has a particular resonance with the younger adults in the congregation and can become a centrally shared facility which can be used by York Deanery and other churches in the area where full immersion facilities are currently very limited. The flexible space means people can gather more easily to celebrate the baptism and a capacity of 550+ means that the larger numbers often associated with baptisms can be accommodated while retaining good visibility.

Accessibility

A reordered building provides a greater welcome to everyone and particularly for those with disabilities to come to a place where they can feel fully accepted. For the first time they will access the whole building, not just parts of it. Wheelchair or buggy users can choose where to sit and the provision of break out spaces means those with sensory impairments can remain in the church for the whole service or activity.

The current gallery is not accessible nor comfortable so it doesn't get used regularly or effectively. We are concerned for the safety of the gallery stairs, with minor trips and accidents occasionally occurring on the narrow, uneven staircases. The proposed new gallery and staircases will make it a more welcoming proposition to use, allow people to be accommodated in comfort and open up the building to those with disabilities who currently may not attempt to attend because of the building's restrictions.

In particular, a lift to the gallery is still considered a necessity for the following reasons:



- It is expected that the new gallery will be better used by the church at all worship services and attract the younger demographic. Providing an informal space by including retractable seating in the front half of the gallery, increases the value of the space to young people and use for mid-week activities.
- Educational visits can still be hosted as the gallery offers a designated space to safeguard and ensure the safety of children and young people.
- Visitors can access the gallery, appreciate the more open interior, get closer/different views of the medieval stained glass and view artefacts.
- The Belfrey and organisations can host conferences, training and workshops with access to meeting spaces, improving the flexibility and format of programme delivery.
- For all of these people groups and the programmes provided, the lift will improve the experience as all people can access an activity. The lift also means equipment and basic catering facilities can be provided on the first floor.

Toilets - additional toilets will bring significant reduction in queues during Sunday services and any events which involve more than 80 people! The proposed introduction of unisex toilets will support The Belfrey's safeguarding policy and the Equalities Act. Good facilities mean people can stay longer and not journey round the outside of the church, in all weathers, to get to the only accessible toilet. Having toilets at the west end as well as the east improves accessibility.

Technology

The Belfrey benefits from up to date technology but due to piecemeal development its appearance is messy and quality and delivery could be improved with better positioning of the AV desk as well as hiding data and power cabling. It will improve the church appearance and carefully manage historic fabric. The final design reduces the number of proposed TV monitors and motorised screens.

PLUS

Central Staging - will improve sightlines and allow for effective, coherent delivery of services and activities. It will improve the interaction between service/worship leaders and the congregation as well as for speakers at conferences and other events. The proposed flexible staging will support different seating configurations and ,as it is being designed for most panels to be wheeled, will make it easier to clear away leaving the nave area clear.

Storage - the church struggles for storage and often looks untidy and messy, particularly in the chancel. The proposed storage facilities will improve accessibility, health and safety for people, longevity and security of equipment and resources. Having compared the current volume of storage with the volume of storage proposed in the proposed Reordering, The Belfrey is confident that it has the level of storage to meet its requirements.

Services - the Belfrey wants the building to be sustainable, be maintained effectively and see a reduction in its carbon footprint. Our current heating system is inadequate for the building. The proposed bivalent system with the installation of an air source heat pump, will reduce carbon emissions. See Section 6 for more information and the Architect's Sustainability Statement within the Statement of Significance.

Health & Safety - The Belfrey manages the safety of people in the Church process to minimise accidents. There are examples shown in section 5 Evidence of Need, where parents have had minor issues with the pews. There are a few incidents recorded regarding the staircases to the



gallery and people, including visitors, are actively discouraged from going up to the gallery. The stairs are narrow, uneven and lead to a maze of pew furniture that is difficult to get round and uncomfortable to sit on once there. The centre set of gallery pews are used more than the side pews because they are easier to access (as well as the obvious point of sightlines). The design also makes it difficult to manage safeguarding.

WHY DO THE PROJECT NOW?

The City of York has a number of churches within its walls. Some have closed, some have become museums or used for other purposes, others struggle with small numbers. The Belfrey is offering a project which is audacious - working with a beautiful 16th Century building and a dynamic worshipping church family. It's time now to provide that blend of a lively expression of the Christian faith alongside a sensitively considered modern reordering.

Some of the fabric repairs identified in 2014 were required to be completed within the 5-year period so these are becoming urgent. Undertaking the reordering alongside restoration will maximise economies of scale.

In 2019 a faculty was granted for the removal, restoration and relocation of the unused William Denman organ to St Lawrence's Church in York. The space is now empty and makes it easier for the work to be carried out.

As The Belfrey has been given Resource Church status, it is in a privileged position to undertake alterations which will benefit that delivery from 2025 onwards. The sooner the building is reordered, the more effectively The Belfrey can support itself and other churches with a programme of leadership training and development to enable the planting of new churches. Significant gifts provide the assurance and expectation that construction can take place and the church building reoccupied by 2025.

The significant events that the UK and the city of York has been through in the last three years has meant uncertainty for the economy including the tourism sector. Reordering the Church shows a commitment to the City, will contribute to the economy in terms of Visitor numbers and greater use of the building in general.



5. WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE FOR THE NEED?

Fabric renewal - Ferrey & Mennim was appointed the inspecting Architect in 2019 and carried out the latest Quinquennial inspection. This report, which is listed in the Appendices, can be provided if required. It does corroborate what was found by Peter Pace in the 2014 Quinquennial and nothing of particular note has been newly discovered. Assessment reports of the stained glass, wall memorials and ledger stones have been appended to the Statement of Significance.

Consultation

A comprehensive consultation process with the church family has been ongoing since spring 2018. In the first consultation Members were asked five key questions about the project in terms of what was most and least important to them. Belfrey Group leaders collated their group's feedback which went to the Impact project board to be collated and analysed. The resulting reports were used to develop the Client Requirements document⁶.

From this consultation a series of priorities were identified and the key priorities are outlined in Section 2 and referred to throughout the document. (See Appendix B).

Due to the complexity of the building, and the priority given by the church family to the reordering, the decision was taken to select an Architect via a RIBA design competition. Phase 1 and 2 briefs drew upon the Client Requirements document, the 2011 Conservation Management Plan, the Quinquennial inspection and other documents, to ensure Architects were well informed. 35 expressions of interest were received and 5 firms shortlisted. Their designs were displayed as a public exhibition where church family, users and visitors alike could assess and comment on the ideas. 270 people completed a self-completion questionnaire asking what was liked/disliked about the design concepts in terms of layout, creativity, flexibility, fit with existing building and surrounding environment. Reports from Technical panel members (Diocese of York, Historic England, City of York Council and former Inspecting Architect) critiqued the 5 Architects' approaches. LDN Architects was chosen as their team understood well The Belfrey, their design was sensitive and creative and they appreciated the need to manage cost wisely.

In 2011, when the church first seriously started the journey of reordering the church, the then Bishop of Selby, the Right Revd Martin Wallace, wrote a long letter to the current Vicar Matthew Porter, encouraging and exhorting Matthew and the church to work towards such a project. The full letter is included as Appendix D but an excerpt is included here:

"Over the past fourteen years both as Bishop and previously as Archdeacon I have taken services in literally hundreds and hundreds of churches. St Michael's has to be one of the most difficult in which to conduct worship. This is for a number of reasons. To lead worship from the front means either being at floor level or on the current stage which feels far too elevated. Both are unnatural. If leading from the floor, then the height of the pews makes it difficult to see people and for them to see you, while those sitting in the side pews are consigned almost to watch as spectators. It is therefore all the more extraordinary, and a testimony to the grace of God, that St Michael's has a unique place in the Diocese, the North of England, and nationally as so large a congregation. There is no human explanation: it has to be God!"

Since that time The Belfrey community has taken part in updates approximately twice yearly, some of the members took part in developed design workshops and advice sought from specific groups including Accessibility and the Eco Advisory Group.

⁶ Copies of this documentation are available on request



Liturgical Use and Development

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) 2011, notes that developments in religious thought and practice have been reflected in liturgical arrangements and changes within the church. The relatively open church (i.e. without chantries, side chapels or tower) for corporate worship in the early 16th century presented a very different interior arrangement and atmosphere from the medieval church as a result of changing modes of worship.

The proposed design is moving back to this open church space which allows much greater flexibility for worship while the addition of a light, contemporary gallery continues to provide a good seating capacity, better sightlines for people to focus on worship and teaching and improves the spatial qualities of the interior.

Flexibility of space

As part of its strategic preparation for the reordering, the Impact project team has visited and liaised with a number of churches & cathedrals. They include All Saints Woodford Wells, St Paul's & St George's in Edinburgh, Hull Minster, Bath Abbey, All Saints Winterton, St Mary's Redcliffe, Bristol, three Cambridge Churches, St Giles Pontefract and Wakefield Cathedral.



Corporate prayer currently dwarfs the wheelchair user and pews make it difficult to gather.

Church family conversations become difficult to include people due to constraints of pews



Welcome entrance

The Belfrey Doors welcome teams have to stand outside to be seen because of the narrow, dark entrance. Sometimes this can be off putting to Visitors as they have to get past people. It is easier if they can see where they are going and connect with someone when they are ready.

Some visitors don't even enter, as even with open doors, they cannot see in so either assume its unwelcoming or closed. A mobile ramp is used but this makes the entrance even narrower and people have tripped or fallen over the ramp when attending services and larger event.

Congestion in the Narthex is especially noted by those attending the 11am service, which attracts a large number of families, with restricted movement due to the parking of prams and pushchairs. The crossover between the 9am and 11am can cause bottle necks and queues often form for the 6pm service which is not pleasant in cold/wet weather. It takes a long time for people to exit from larger seasonal events and concerts such as the Yorkshire Bach Choir and managing intervals can be very difficult.

West end entrance creates a tunnel effect dark, narrow and uneven and forces Welcome Team to stand outside

A consistent temperature for the church can be difficult to maintain throughout the year and the current radiator and pipework system is a safety risk as it can be hot to touch. Having visited All Saints Church Winterton, it was clear that the provision of an underfloor heating system added substantially to the welcome and comfort of the visitor.







Accessibility

At the lunchtime service, some attendees eat in the pews as the chancel is tightly packed with tables, chairs and close to the chancel steps with queues for hot drinks and sandwiches. Some people have fallen and now eat in the pews as they are anxious about moving around safely. Parts of the building have white paint applied to remind people of extra steps and the stone floor is uneven creating trip hazards.



Lunchtime service with queue to sandwiches in north aisle and packed tables in chancel

"For the building to be accessible to wheelchair users the whole space should be largely accessible so that people with limited mobility can always participate in the event/service and, when desired, alongside their family and friends." Excerpt from former Church Warden's personal experience (shared in full in Appendix F).

The pews are not accessible because there is a step to get into each pew and the doors on the collegiate pews area are a safety issue. Over the years children and adults have suffered bumps, knocks, trips and trapped fingers from getting in and out of the pews, particularly the collegiate pews. This can be off putting when welcoming new families with children as the building does not feel particularly welcoming or safe.



Café zone

There has been a significant increase in the number of cafés (commercial and nonpaying) opening up in churches over the last 10 years as Christians recognise that people enjoy a café environment and are more likely to enter into an environment with which they feel familiar and more comfortable about having a chat over a drink.

Some of the *Belfrey Doors* teams provide a café facility to visitors which has led to opportunities to talk about the church building and the Christian faith, as both visitors and volunteers alike are more relaxed. The free refreshments and background worship music can help with conversations.

Some recent stories of conversations include:

- A sense of healing with a Spanish visitor who was disillusioned with church.
- Two Russian visitors were keen to engage in a long conversation about faith.
- A couple who lost their son were in deep pain and wanted to know why God had let certain things happen to them, were offered a listening ear and prayer.
- A person in a wheelchair who needed somewhere comfortable to rest, and wasn't left on their own, was given a drink and could enjoy a good conversation
- A homeless person who has somewhere to connect, and their Social Worker later explained how much it helped him
- A Buddhist lady who wanted to understand the Christian faith
- A Chinese family who asked for prayers for a member of their family on their wedding day
- Visiting Vicars and Church Wardens who ask about The Belfrey's programme and leave with new ideas and resources⁷

Seasonal events such as the Christmas cafés continue to prove popular as visitors enjoy hospitality, take part in carol singing and can listen to talks and testimonies through the day. In 2021 the two Christmas cafés held attracted more than 1100 people on each day.



Christmas café queue funnelling up to chancel with lots of unused space taken up by the pews

"Visitors to SMLB often find comfort and peace," explains Matthew Porter (Vicar of The Belfrey). "Many ask questions. Some receive prayer. We are often told how the experience draws them closer to God. We often have people who as a result of visiting us decide to start following Jesus".

⁷ Source: enquiries taken by Reception team. Numbers recorded on a Wednesday. Testimony record made by Belfrey Doors teams and collated by Belfrey Doors Coordinator.

Technology





The current technology arrangements create

additional clutter which could be better laid out to improve the working area while a proposed mobile media desk can hide certain equipment and cabling with the potential flexibility to improve a service or event being hosted.

A/V desk with lack of storage and mixture of equipment

Baptism

The average number of adults being baptised on a year basis is 18, plus 20 reaffirmations of baptismal faith, nearly all of whom will be through full immersion baptism. In the York Diocese the average for those aged 13+ engaging in baptism (of all forms) is 280 per annum across 587 churches and in England the numbers of mature baptisms (18+) is 8,683 across 15,583 churches⁸.

The current arrangements of filling up and draining a portable birthing pool in the chancel (as the only space big enough) is awkward, messy and time consuming. The Belfrey has held external baptisms in the past and of course there is the wonderful video of the Archbishop of York carrying out Easter baptisms in 2013 with churches in York, outside the church building. https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/news-events/news/easter-baptisms-by-the-archbishop3/

Full immersion facilities are very limited across the York Christian community (the Diocese has had no request to consider a baptistery for at least 10 years) so it will be exciting to offer a permanent, acceptable baptism pool which could be shared with Anglicans and other Christian denominations. (For example, an Anglican church in Manchester has a baptistery and this is offered as a resource across their Deanery).

Full immersion using a birthing pool in the chancel



⁸ Diocese of York. Church of England Research and Statistics Team: Statistics for Mission 2017 Report



Toilets - The two toilets in the church are inadequate to cater for the numbers of people and are currently accessed through a narrow door at the East end, down steps and no space to pass one another. Queues often form back into the church as people use the toilets after services, during intervals of a concert or event and when a large café is in progress. Not helped because the access is very obviously at the front in the chancel area.



Access to the two toilets at the East end of the church building The 'accessible' toilet is at the back of the Parish Centre (and would no longer meet legislative requirements). People access it by going through the West door along the north side of the church and back into the adjacent building, 12 Minster Yard, along a congested corridor (narrower than 1200mm width) so wheelchair users and mobility impaired would struggle to even get to the facility.

Feedback given from Church Leaders Undertaking Reordering projects

Dave Richards, Rector of Ps and Gs in Edinburgh advised The Belfrey that it was a hard road to travel but the rewards, now a decade on, can clearly be seen.

"The reality is we have grown from 600 to nearly 1,000 since we did the reordering. In the same period, we have planted two churches, our Babies and Toddler group has grown to nearly 400 units because we have more flexible spaces, and we now feed 100 people every week in our Saturday meal for those who are homeless or on the margins of society."

Paul Harcourt, Vicar and Ken MacGregor, Operations Director of All Saints Woodford Wells shared the following information post building project:

"Our electoral roll has increased by 22% over the past 7 years, to 748 in 2019. We do know that some of these have come through the versatility of the space that we created. For example, we are currently running Life Courses (Alpha) where we are able to offer a cooked meal and a safe environment for people wanting to ask questions. We've had at least 15 people come to faith as a result of these courses.

Our facilities have enabled us to have a greater interaction with the local community as well as the existing church family. Having a variety of sizes, our rooms are used by several regular hirers during the week as well as church-led outreach activities. These include The Atrium Café, weekly Luncheon Club and Toddler groups. The site also enables us to hold large, one-off events - our most recent being a Beer & Gin Festival, giving the congregation an opportunity to invite friends and advertise our upcoming Life Course. We also ran our "Join In" Holiday Club again this summer for children aged 0-11, when over 650 people were on site over 4 days. Our sensory room offers a dedicated space for children and adults with special needs and is really appreciated by the parents/carers of those who use it. Worship, Communion, Bible study, evangelism events and staff time together always take priority."



6. HOW IS THE PROPOSAL CONTRIBUTING TO THE NET ZERO CARBON TARGETS?

The Belfrey has an Eco Advisory Group and the church joined the Eco-Church scheme. It has been awarded the Bronze award but ultimately wants to achieve the Gold award and appreciates there is work to do. The Eco Advisory Group is responsible for the Environmental Policy, currently going through an update that can be translated into an operational plan. As part of that, the group has recently agreed to adopt the One Planet Living Framework and its Ten Principles (see table below). An organisation can create a Sustainability strategy using these principles, then submit itself to a review with the organisation Bioregional who developed the framework. LDN has been mindful of this framework in terms of the sustainability it has considered for Impact.

LDN Architects, via the client requirements brief, was instructed to include every reasonable measure to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the building and its energy usage. A significant part of Impact is the careful repair and improvement works to the existing fabric to extend the life of the building for future generations to enjoy whilst maintaining, where possible, the existing building fabric and contained within it, embodied carbon. LDN has produced a Sustainability Statement which can be found within this application. Consideration has been given to various features to look at the carbon output in their manufacture as well as the operational carbon output when installed. This is why the decision was made NOT to install solar PV panels at this time because of the significant amount of carbon released in their manufacture. However, The Belfrey will monitor this situation and these may still be incorporated in the future.

| Principle | What The Belfrey is currently doing/planning |
|----------------------------|--|
| Health and Happiness | Mental Health First Aiders - a key team of Belfrey Staff (paid & unpaid) have been trained to support and pray with people with mental health conditions. |
| Equity and local Economy | Impact's preference is to hire a Main Contractor which is local, as long as they can meet criteria, and therefore employ local people. Local caterers are used when required for events. The Belfrey Hall is regularly used by local organisations. |
| Culture and Community | The Belfrey has set up and supported a number of charities. In 2021 it launched its Social Action Programme focusing on those who are disadvantaged and particularly children and families, those in poverty and mental health. |
| Land and nature | External landscaping allows for benches so that people are encouraged to sit in the area and appreciate Queen's Square and this part of York. |
| Sustainable water | Low flow fixtures on toilets |
| Local and sustainable food | Food has been sourced from supermarkets, which would otherwise throw food away, for the 'Never Give |

One Planet Living Principles:



| | Up' group. This would Currently the group is focusing on cooking skills with 'Let's Cook' so too small to make this work but would consider this again for future larger programme activities. |
|------------------------|---|
| Travel and Transport | As a gathered church, many people have some distance to travel but will park their cars on the outskirts. A significant number can walk in, cycle, use the City's cycle and scooter scheme or access the buses. The proposed bike rack will provide 10 spaces for The Belfrey and local community to use. |
| Materials and Products | Some of the materials for Impact will be sourced locally and from sustainable sources. Strategy for reusing materials in the building such as wood from the pews and gallery to include where possible, furniture for the reordered church such as tables. |
| Zero waste | The Belfrey currently recycles all its waste. Its plan is to immediately reduce its waste by 50% once back in the Reordered building and then look for further reductions. |
| Zero carbon energy | Please see the Sustainability Strategy which refers to key features such as heating & lighting. Remaining in the current church building, ensures The Belfrey uses it effectively for generations to come. |

We are committed to the calling in Christ to steward the environment in the best we can and fully intend to reduce the carbon footprint of the church building as far as is practicable and financially possible. The Belfrey delivers teaching and builds understanding of the issues around climate change and good stewardship of the environment.

7. WHAT OTHER OPTIONS TO MEET THE NEED WERE CONSIDERED, TAKING POINT 6 AND THE IMPACT IDENTIFIED IN THE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE INTO ACCOUNT?

The CMP is quite cautious in its recommendations regarding the building (pages 93-94) Section 4. Issues, Vulnerabilities and Opportunities, 4.3.2 Impact Assessment-Capacity for Change. A sample sentence says ". . . In conclusion the building is capable of sensitive adaptation and conservation, particularly within the porch, narthex and vestry." Assessment of certain features of the church were carried out to advise us further, including the stained glass by Barley Studios and the staircases by Charles Taylor. Further advice on the Gallery was sought from Hugh Harrison, and a report on the history and significance of the stained glass commissioned from Dr Lisa Reilly.

Building an extension

An extension to the west end of the church was debated vigorously in early design concepts but from early written feedback from York Minster, it was clear they would not support this idea. The Belfrey is clear it can improve it welcomes with the current design and make effective use of the land outside while working within York Minster's Neighbourhood Plan.

Building down

Options to create a basement level have been considered but were discounted. It was clear from the opening up works in May 2022 that the current proposals will require careful planning and preparation to work around the archaeology. A basement level would be very high risk, involve considerable cost and harm to the fabric, while not generating the additional useable space needed.

Rooftop space

Some feasibility work was conducted on designing a rooftop space above both the north and south aisles, but this has not been considered further because of the financial investment required, against the space gained, as well as the engineering difficulties, fire assessment and of course statutory permissions.

Phased Reordering

It has been suggested that the nave pews might be removed as the initial phase of the reordering, with the possibility of removing the collegiate pews later. However, this approach would undermine the viability of the project in a number of ways: -

- It would not be a suitable way to 'test' the need for flexibility as retaining the collegiate pews would substantially reduce the amount of flexible space, with the collegiate pews accounting for around 45% of the floor area currently occupied by pews
- It would disrupt plans for relaying the floor and make it difficult to install a heating system that only covered half of the required area
- It would prejudice the objective of achieving level access on the ground floor
- Access to storage space for chairs and tables would be compromised
- A second period of moving out of the church would be harmful to the wellbeing and future growth of the congregation
- Costs would increase and it would not fit with the terms of the large donation given for a whole project approach

The Impact Board and The Belfrey would not support this approach.

Identifying additional spaces

From adapting the competition design to the concept design, it was clear that we were already



compromising on meeting space. A feasibility study conducted on 12 Minster Yard in Autumn 2019, and subsequent concept design work, identified three meeting room spaces; accessibility at ground floor level; and additional storage and toilet facilities. York Minster Chapter has offered in principle approval to The Belfrey regarding an extra long lease.

The cost of such a refurbishment which includes a lift and external landscaping, is considerable but the PCC agreed that it will form part of the project. Retaining 12 Minster Yard will continue to be critical to support the mission and activities of The Belfrey.

What if we didn't stay in these buildings?

The CMP refers to the Townscape, setting and group value as having 'exceptional (or high) significance'. SMLB is recognised for attracting international visitors because of its location. Relocating would lose access to around 35k+ visitors per annum and the opportunity to increase this number; and just as importantly its special relationship with the Minster.

In the second half of the 20th Century, SMLB was in a vulnerable state and it was unclear if it would survive until the arrival of the Minister David Watson in 1965 who helped revive the church of St Cuthbert's and then plant into St Michael le Belfrey 8 years later, when the congregation outgrew St Cuthbert's. SMLB is now thriving and St Cuthbert's is used as a dedicated House of Prayer for the city and region. To relocate would lose that significant investment in terms of people's commitment, prayer and mission. During this period, it also became abundantly clear that the current layout did not work for a church congregation of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The CMP recognises St Michael le Belfrey's 'Continuity as a place of worship'. A worshipping congregation on site is confirmed from the 13th Century but there are clues to some form of 'church' taking place at least from the 8th century based on records of St John of Beverley. It is even possible that the first York Minster was located on the site of SMLB.

12 years ago, the church family made the conscious decision to stay at St Michael le Belfrey. The opportunities to deliver The Belfrey's 5 Year Road Map from its church building are significant. There are great public transport links and large numbers of people can access the building; we can share the history of St Michael le Belfrey and the Christian faith and we can play an active part in serving York in such a distinctive location. As the world and the city has battled its way through COVID-19 pandemic and challenging economic conditions, The Belfrey remains confident that it can sustain a vibrant worshipping community in the city centre, for years to come.

Using other buildings in our Portfolio

The Belfrey has St Cuthbert's and the Belfrey Hall within its portfolio of buildings. A significant number of activities already take place in these venues and St Cuthbert's layout allows up to 40 worshippers only in the open nave section. It is designated as a House of Prayer with prayer activities and events running through the week. The Belfrey Hall is the church's Hall, seats about 80 people and is used for outreach activities and external hire. Consideration has been given to splitting activities across these venues but this already causes difficulties with the Sunday children's work, as noted above, and would weaken the Sunday worshipping communities.

The key issue is capacity as neither building can accommodate any of our Sunday services. The weekday service might be squeezed in but accessibility would be reduced.

Hiring other Buildings

St Michael's Spurriergate ('The Spurriergate Centre') is a closed church located at the end of Coney Street in York. It has no pews and can seat about 80 people. It is run by St Michael's York Trust, not by The Belfrey, so being able to use the centre is not guaranteed. The centre has



already been assessed as a possible decant location and not seen as suitable due to a number of factors. Overall the space on the ground floor would be too small to accommodate any of the Sunday services. The mezzanine is open and while it is a space to run another group it would be difficult to do at the same time as running a service. It is not particularly safe for children's work and is not accessible. The heating in the building is not very effective and is cold in the winter. Its location for children's groups on its own would not work as it is too far from the main church building to be practical and raises more significant safeguarding and safety issues than the current challenge of walking children to the Belfrey Hall.

Other buildings will be hired during the construction stage so that church services and programmes can continue in another city venue(s). During this time, The Belfrey will consider mission opportunities that might benefit those venue(s) and could continue when the move is made back to the reordered building.

To become a transient church without a permanent home, The Belfrey believes, will seriously undermine the current strength of meeting as a church family, not least due to the size of its church membership. The current location creates a sense of belonging and community from which it is possible to operate as a Resource Church and have the resilience to send people out to plant new churches. More time and cost will be expended in setting up and packing down each service.

In addition, the risk of excessive reliance on leasing other buildings has been underlined by the recent loss of The Belfrey's Youth Centre (known as The Storehouse) due to the property being required by the landlord for redevelopment.

The Belfrey's strong skills in contemporary worship including the latest AV technology and the opportunity to be a partner in the City's digital media and creative arts arena could not be fully realised through the hire of other buildings.

Relocate

If our justification for this reordering and repair project struggles to gain support, then we will explore permanent relocation in greater depth which may still involve vacating the building.

Establish a new church in the City and hand SMLB back to the Diocese of York

The city has a number of brownfield sites inside and outside the city walls and vacant buildings that The Belfrey could consider relocating to, buying land and constructing a new build or buying a building and carrying out an extensive refurbishment.

The cost of acquiring land and a new build has the potential to be at least 25% cheaper than the current project or 50% cheaper if The Belfrey was to buy and refurbish a building. (Costs have been compared using the Turner & Townsend Partners building cost survey).

This would support the mission of the church and The Belfrey could continue to be a Resource Church. However, it is likely that a significant number of church members would leave the church and we would need to spend some years rebuilding its congregation in a new location.

The church family would be disappointed to lose the special city-centre relationships that have been developed over many years. We would lose the missional opportunity of welcoming visitors from around the world, sharing the Christian faith and celebrating the heritage of the building.

Keep SMLB as a city centre Visitor Attraction

Restore the fabric and the interior to its historic past, while at the same time establishing a purpose-built church presence on the outskirts of York.



This does not meet the client requirements brief, the financial risk is too high and the benefits of having a vibrant city centre Christian presence which can serve visitors, businesses and residents alike is lost. It would leave a museum piece next to York Minster.

Keeping the building open as a heritage exhibit would be more difficult to manage as many of the *Belfrey Doors* teams volunteer because they want to share the history and their faith in a building they attend.

The Visitor Experience programme would be more difficult to deliver, without a worshipping community being present, and harder for Visitors to see the connection between the building and it being a living dynamic example of worship.

In the case of a relocation it would be essential to understand if current donations could be used for a new build or refurbishment project and it is unlikely that the repairs programme, currently proposed, could use those donations. Church family members are much less likely to give money to a building which they would no longer use. The Minster Neighbourhood area would be left with a vacant building vulnerable to further deterioration, without regular maintenance, and the city would be left without a vibrant central worshipping community.

A relocation would severely impact the good working relationship with York Minster and would end a significant 1200 year old history of York Minster and SMLB working with one another, as well as future opportunities to collaborate on worship and city events.

The vibrant congregations of the church would disappear from the City along with many missional opportunities outlined above. It would be a great loss to York's 3.4m leisure visitors and 730,000 conference delegates per year,⁹ as well as those working and living in the city.

⁹ Annual figure calculated by 'Make it York' <u>www.makeityork.com</u>



8. THE BELFREY'S 5 YEAR ROAD MAP AND WHY THE REORDERED SPACE IS CRITICAL

This is an additional section we have included in the Statement of Need to explain why the reordered space is so important to The Belfrey's 5 Year Road Map and the aspirational programme it wants to deliver to realise its five key aims (see below and Appendix D). This road map has been developed over the last eighteen months, approved by the church PCC, and has begun to be implemented in strategic and financial decisions, shared with the church family and supported with teaching at the Sunday services.

The Developing Leaders and Planting Churches aims, both of which fully support the Diocesan strategy, are critical to continued church growth for The Belfrey, in the city and in the region. (Planting new churches takes a huge amount of energy and resources and growing a strong core church family is vital to realising this goal). The church family needs to be together in one building and to continue to add to its numbers to send out to other places. A Developing Leaders Strategy has been produced, a summary of which is included in this section, as it more clearly highlights the aspirational need and reliance on the Reordering.

Very importantly a clearer aim of 'Serving York' has been added, recognising the existing foundation of social action initiatives that church members have set up and been involved with, for decades¹⁰. It brings to the fore the existing importance the parish places on working towards eradicating poverty and disadvantage in its neighbourhood (the city), the greater well being of York residents, developing community partnerships and at the same time contributing towards the city's economy. Its city centre location is ideal for those seeking support as it is much easier to access than being on the periphery. The Belfrey already has an existing and rapidly developing programme of social action and engagement albeit currently limited by the facilities of the church building. Through an improved welcome area, flexible and accessible space and facilities; the café zone, the Wednesday lunchtime service with better refreshment facilities, and mental health and wellbeing courses, the church building will offer an effective physical presence and can act as a signposting hub for more specific support services. It provides a venue for statutory and voluntary organisations to use/partner with us and a place where people are welcomed, accepted, cared for and can belong.

In addition, a reordered building would provide a unique, flexible, mid-sized venue which improves the city's hospitality sector and makes a bigger contribution to the economy.

- Serving York tackling big city issues both in terms of social action and partnership with key organisations in the city, with a stretch goal of 'every one loves one'
- Making Disciples welcoming new people, with a stretch goal of 'every one brings one'
- Nurturing Disciples growing lifelong followers of Jesus, with a stretch goal of 'every one disciples one'
- Developing Leaders releasing new apprentice leaders, with a stretch goal of 'every leader trains one'
- Planting Churches starting worshipping new communities, with a stretch goal of 'every church plants one' and an action to support a new church plant at least every 2 years and/or revitalise an existing church in the Diocese which needs to grow.

¹⁰ Mentioned earlier in the document, organisations and initiatives have either been set up and/or actively supported by members of the Belfrey including York neighbours, YoYo, Besom, Restore and Acts 435. It continues to run its Never Give Up programme for the homeless and disadvantaged on a Thursday.



Excerpts from Developing Leaders Strategy

We have agreed with the Diocese of York, as part of the *Multiply* programme, that we will receive a curate every two years in order to send them, with a team, to plant or re-plant. Aided by a generous donation we have also established a Northern Church Planting Fund to help us give some financial support to the planting and/or re-planting of churches. At the invitation of other bishops, and with the support of the Archbishop, we may do this in other Dioceses too. The focus is particularly upon those in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

As we plan ahead there will be a natural focus on young adults, especially through our extensive internship programme, partly due to our remit to help the Diocese realise its priorities and partly because of the demographics of our church membership. However, leadership is relevant to all ages so there will be people who we can develop and those who can mentor developing leaders.

Our present programme includes: general leadership development; our internship programme where, over the last fifteen years, we have trained about 140 young leaders; courses such as *School of Theology, Apologetics* and *CPAS Growing Leaders*; events and conferences including *Prayer Ministry* and *Equip* attracting 100+ people; and preparing and sending leaders for ordination training.

In the future we will continue to expand these programme strands. With the present two-year intern programme, we are looking to add a third year around Planting, which would increase the intern intake to around 45 per year by 2025. When it comes to events and conferences we have strong relational links with a number of Christian bodies including New Wine, Alpha, Fusion, Evangelical Alliance, St Hild College and others. The feedback has shown with events such as *Equip Leadership Conference* that while the content was very helpful, the venue was uncomfortable, drafty and lacked basic facilities. With the proposed church reordering, conferences have huge potential for growth, especially with the Belfrey expertise, skills and human resources to deliver such events.

A reordered church building would also open up new avenues of leadership development such as Heritage with Christianity and Hospitality. The church has a good track record of investing in a team of volunteers to welcome visitors who can blend a knowledge of the church with an invitation to explore the Christian faith. This gives a more rounded experience for the visitor and also complements other priorities in the Five Year Road Map, such as Welcoming New People.

Outputs & Outcomes

CHURCH PLANTING: Regularly provide and effectively equip leaders with a team to plant ROBUST LEADERSHIP: Send out planting leaders who then aim to plant within 5 years ORDINANDS: send 5 Ordinands per year to train as clergy in the North of England INTERNS: increase current number of Interns from 12-15 to 45-50 by end 2025 COURSES: Continue to run *Growing Leaders* type courses with at least 125 people trained by 2025 COLLEGE: Raise up leaders in churches throughout the region who have been equipped at The Belfrey in areas of worship, prayer, pastoring, teaching and evangelism and continue to have access to mentoring and support ('every leader trains one')

CONFERENCES: Equip leaders in churches around the region who can confidently establish, deliver and grow children, youth and student work. Run 6 conferences and training events a year focused on leadership development. Provide a venue to the city, business and church networks for others to train and develop people

VENUE: This will require a central, flexible church with a seating capacity of 500+

Belfrey

Accessibility

An Accessibility Assessment Working Group was formed in 2020 to assess both the current space and to support the Impact Project, to make sure that the five aims could mean that access needs for all people could be addressed. They helped to look at the gaps in accessibility. Members of The Belfrey congregation took part in focus groups and interviews to critique Designs to ensure that features proposed and features affected would provide the best accessible experience possible. A number of The Belfrey team have championed access issues in the last year, making short term improvements such as quiet spaces for people to use during Services. In 2022 The Belfrey agreed the need for a permanent group so that access continues to be assessed in terms of services and programme offered in the short term, before repairs and reordering commences. Further consultation has taken place with Disability Action Yorkshire and Chaplain at York St John University to share design progress and ensure detailed points have been considered including handrails, width of steps, colour and use of materials.

APPENDICES

These documents have been saved and uploaded in a separate folder.

Appendix A - Client Requirements Document

Appendix B - Client Brief Phase 2

Appendix C - 2019 Quinquennial Report produced by Ferrey & Mennim which agrees with the fabric repairs identified in the 2104 Quinquennial report and does not reveal any major new concerns.

Appendix D - St Michael le Belfrey 5 Year Road Map

Appendix E - Letters of support

- Appendix F Accessibility Audit & Consultation
- Appendix G Fundraising Campaign Plan v5