

**Neutral Citation Number: [2024] ECC She 3**

**DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD  
In the Consistory Court**

Her Honour Judge Sarah Singleton KC  
*Chancellor*

**In the Matter of ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST GOOLE - Construction of below ground drainage infrastructure in the churchyard to facilitate the future installation of toilets in St John's Church**

**Judgment**

**1. The Application**

The works proposed are for the construction of below ground drainage infrastructure in the churchyard, east of the chancel, to facilitate the future installation of toilets in St John's Church. Remarkably there are no toilets in the church at present. The planned toilets will be the subject of a further petition, but these works are crucial to any such application.

**2. The Church**

St John the Evangelist is a grade 2 listed church constructed between 1843 and 1848 when Goole had only recently been developed. The town was created at the site of the junction between the newly built Aire and Calder canal with the River Ouse to create an inland port. The church construction was paid for by the Aire and Calder Navigation Company.

The church is important to its local community and to the Diocese. A large number of occasional offices are conducted and it is estimated that more than 10,000 people visit per year. The church is one of two resourcing churches in the Diocese of Sheffield.

**3. The impact of the works**

These works do not affect the character of this church as a building of special architectural or historical interest. An archaeological watching brief will be deployed during the works. A bat and ecological survey carried out between 2021 and 2024 concluded that the level of impact did not require additional compulsory mitigation.

**4. Consultation, Planning Permission and Public Notice**

A validated planning application has been made to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Yorkshire Water has been consulted as have the East Yorkshire Highways Authority. Public Notice requirements have been completed and no objections have been received.

**5. DAC**

The DAC recommended these works for approval at their meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 subject to the provisos that:-

1. A smaller foul water pumping tank being used as recommended during pre-petition consultations,
2. The boxed-in soil pipe being painted to match the wall, and:
3. An archaeological watching brief being undertaken when the pipe trench is being dug.

These provisos are accepted by the Petitioners.

## **6. Decision and Reasons**

It is remarkable that this well used church does not have toilets in the church building. These works are well planned and a necessary first step for the installation of a crucial amenity which will enable more and better use of the Church alongside the Parish Centre. There is an obvious and acute need for toilets in the church building and these works are the foundation of any such project literally and metaphorically. The installation of toilets will be the subject of a further Petition.

The works have taken very careful planning because there is no convenient existing foul drainage infrastructure close enough to the church to enable an obvious route to connect with the infrastructure required for the installation of toilets in the future. The prohibitive likely costs of this part of the project have hitherto prevented planning for the toilets getting very far.

Extensive underground works are necessary whichever of the difficult options were selected by the Petitioners. The option selected has been chosen to minimise possible disturbance of graves and to reduce extensive underground works on land or property not part of the church estate although excavation across a public highway will be necessary. The proposed location for the toilets is the vestry which is the most modern part of the church. This is to reduce disruption and works to the oldest parts of the church which are particularly protected by its listed status. The Petitioners and the PCC have plans to undertake an attractive landscaping scheme in the churchyard. The works under this Petition must proceed before the landscaping of the churchyard can sensibly advance.

Recent availability of suitable funding has enabled the planning for the installation of toilets finally to proceed and prompt this Petition now. As with the accompanying Petition for the associated car park construction, I do hope that the imminent deadline for applying for such a funding application explains the brevity of this judgment.

These works have been thoroughly planned and this option carefully selected.  
I have no hesitation in directing a faculty be issued accordingly.

**Sarah Singleton KC**

**HHJ Sarah Singleton KC**  
**Chancellor of the Diocese**

**14<sup>th</sup> April 2024**