



Faculty – Grade II listed town centre church by Garlick, Park & Sykes in 1878 – Further reordering works to the nave and chancel to include the removal of the east partition wall (installed during a previous reordering) to reveal the crossing and chancel area, the disposal of a wooden pulpit (with canopy) and lectern, and the installation of a carpeted dais in the chancel laid over the decorative tiled floor and choir stall platforms and extending out into the nave – DAC recommending proposal despite objections from Church Buildings Council and the Victorian Society (neither of whom chose to become a party opponent) – Faculty granted

Application Ref: 2021-067334

**IN THE CONSISTORY COURT OF
THE DIOCESE OF BLACKBURN**

Date: Wednesday, 27 July 2022

Before:

THE WORSHIPFUL DAVID HODGE QC, CHANCELLOR

In the matter of:

St John the Evangelist, Blackpool

THE PETITION OF:

THE REVEREND ANDREW JAMES DYKES (Vicar)

HOWARD DEANE (Churchwarden)

NANCY ROGERS (Churchwarden)

This is an unopposed petition determined on the papers and without a hearing.

Objections were received from the Church Buildings Council and the Victorian Society but neither of them has elected to become a party opponent.

The following cases are referred to in the Judgment:

Re All Saints, Hooton Pagnell [2017] ECC She 1

Re St Alkmund, Duffield [2013] Fam 158

Re St Chad, Longsdon [2019] ECC Lic 5

Re St John the Baptist, Penshurst (2015) 17 Ecc LJ 393

Re St Peter & St Paul, Aston Rowant [2019] ECC Oxf 3, (2020) 22 Ecc LJ 265

Re St Peter, Shipton Bellinger [2016] Fam 193

JUDGMENT

Introduction

1. This online petition, dated 14 March 2022, by the vicar and the churchwardens of this Grade II listed town centre church (situated within the Blackpool Town Centre Conservation Area) seeks a faculty authorising the removal of the partition wall between the nave and the chancel (which was installed as part of an earlier re-ordering in about 2005), the relocation of the chancel screen and the choir stalls to a war memorial chapel in the north transept, the reordering of the current bookshop area, the relocation of the font, and the disposal of a redundant pulpit (with canopy) and eagle lectern. The most controversial features of the proposals are the carpeting of the stage area which is proposed to be installed over the decorative tiled flooring and the choir stall platforms in the chancel and the disposal of the wooden pulpit (with canopy) and lectern. Since objections to these aspects of the proposals have been raised by the Church Buildings Council (**the CBC**) and the Victorian Society (**the VS**), I visited the church, and attended their main Sunday service, on the morning of 26 June 2022.

The church building

2. The church of St John the Evangelist, in the Archdeaconry of Lancaster, is a Grade II listed building constructed in 1878 to designs by Garlick, Park and Sykes. The Statement of Significance describes the church as “*a large Victorian town church, perhaps the best building in the immediate area and an important local landmark. The style is Early English, executed in a traditional manner. The church impresses through scale and form rather than flair.*” The church has significant historical, archaeological, cultural and community interest which reflect its dominant position at the heart of the town of Blackpool.

3. The listing description dates to 20 October 1983 and reads:

Church, 1878, by Garlick Park and Sykes. Stone with slate roofs. Nave with low aisles, tall transepts, apsidal chancel, south west tower. Early English style. Tower of 4 stages with angled buttresses rising to prominent pinnacles and finials, 2 tall belfry louvres on each side. Aisles have 3 triple-lancet windows, nave has three 3-light plate-traceried windows under 2-centred arches. Transepts have 2 tall lancet-shaped windows with plate-tracery; chancel has three 3-light windows with similar tracery.

Interior: nave arcade of cylindrical columns with circular caps simply moulded, supporting three 2-centred arches with moulded soffits. Gallery at west end. Wall posts on corbels at clerestory level; wagon roof with small hammer beams linked by metal tie-rods. Chancel has screen in Gothic style, and wooden panelling with Gothic decoration. Pulpit has suspended sounding-board with domical cap of intricate open-work.

4. However, as a result of re-ordering works, which were authorised following a consistory court hearing early in 1986, and the later installation - apparently in 2005, when the relevant entry (at page 136) of the 2nd edition of *Pevsner's Buildings of England* for *Lancashire: North* notes that the church was subdivided - of a partition wall between the nave area and the transept crossing, the west end of the church, the nave, and the aisles have all been completely transformed since the building was first listed. Only the chancel, with its screen, choir stalls, timber panelling, and decorative tiled flooring; the sanctuary, with its timber panelling, high altar, reredos carving of the Last Supper, and similar tiled flooring; and the war memorial chapel created in the north transept, convey any impression of the church's original interior. However, these form no part of the current worship area within the nave; and, when I visited the church, they were not easily accessible to members of the congregation or the public, requiring one to climb over the current stage area at the east end of the nave before entering through the doorway formed within the glazed archway at the centre of the partition wall between the nave area and the transept crossing. Although, from the images within the current Statement of Significance (some of which are reproduced at the end of this judgment), it would appear that the flexible seating within the worship area in the nave has recently been re-orientated from a north-facing position to a traditional east-west axis, at present the view of the beautiful stained glass windows within the apsidal chancel at the east end of the church is partly obscured by the partition wall no matter where one sits within the nave.

The proposals

5. Inevitably with a major project of this nature, the reordering proposals have evolved over time in the light of discussions with representatives of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (**the DAC**) and in response to observations from the statutory consultees, notably the CBC and the VS. As described in the petition and the notification of advice, the reordering works to the nave and chancel now include:

- (1) The removal of the east wall, installed during a previous reordering, to reveal the east end and chancel area.
- (2) The removal of the chancel screen and choir stalls and their relocation in the north transept to create a separate memorial chapel.
- (3) The relocation of a metal screen in the memorial chapel closer to the north wall.
- (4) The removal and disposal of a wooden pulpit, pulpit canopy, font cover and lectern.
- (5) The installation of a carpeted dais in the chancel, laid over the choir stall platforms and extending out into the nave.
- (6) The installation of a new doorway through to a room in the south transept (created during a previous reordering) and repositioning of a tea bar to create a new welcome area into the church.

- (7) The installation of a kitchenette in an existing storage room.
- (8) The relocation of the font from the south baptistry to the south entrance, and the conversion of the baptistry to a meeting room.
- (9) Replacing a timber-clad glazed screen, installed in a previous reordering, in the north transept to create a creche and storage rooms.
- (10) The installation of a sound desk and new audio-visual equipment, including new speakers and LED screens affixed to columns in the nave.
- (11) The installation of a lighting truss behind the chancel arch and new lighting in the nave and chancel.

The nature of the proposed changes to the church building is best identified by comparing and contrasting the existing ground floor plan drawn up by the architects, Cassidy and Ashton, (drawing number 10799 STJ-CAA-XX-00-DR-A-2000) with their proposed ground floor plan (drawing number 10799 STJ-CAA-XX-00-DR-A-2005 P3). These proposals have the full support of the Parochial Church Council.

The Statement of Significance

6. The revised, illustrated Statement of Significance notes that early dialogue with the DAC and the CBC has influenced the reordering scheme, which has been amended over time to reflect their advice. The parish consider that the alterations reflect a sympathetic approach to the church building. The Statement focuses solely on the interior of the church building and those elements of architectural significance directly relating to the proposed works. It addresses the key areas requiring justification for change as follows:

(1) Relocation of the choir stalls

The relocation of the choir stalls to the war chapel was suggested by the DAC and supported by the CBC. The oak choir stalls are not the originals but replaced the original pine versions in 1915. To facilitate the use of the church as a 'Resourcing Parish', there is a requirement for a more open chancel. Where other resource churches have been able to reach sufficient capacity without using the chancel for leading worship, the unavailability of the side aisles at St John's does not allow for this configuration. Whilst other resource churches have left the chancel relatively untouched, at St John's utilising this space for leading contemporary worship is necessary. Pews abutting the existing structure have been retained, as is the wall panelling which was added in 1936 around the pews and organ console. The relocation of the choir stalls into the war chapel serves as an opportunity to create a 'traditional worship' space and develop the usability of this area as a whole. The pew frontals which are currently in the war chapel are to be relocated to the organ room to be utilised when additional funds are secured to develop this room into a usable space.

(2) Relocation of the chancel screen

The Chancel screen, erected in 1920 as a war memorial, is also proposed to be relocated and its re-positioning in the north transept will form an enclosure to the traditional worship space. It is intended to separate the screen into its three elements (central frame and splayed ends) and reposition them so that the central frame abuts the east wall of the transept and the two splayed

frames (positioned back to back) create an entrance to the worship space. The flags currently forming part of the screen furniture will also be relocated to this new worship space.

(3) Changes to the chancel

Given the requirement to use the chancel for leading contemporary worship, it is proposed to build up a 'non-fixed' timber deck over the tiled chancel floor. This will have three benefits: First, it will protect the tiled floor from increased use, especially from equipment with the potential to damage the surface. Second, it will address the technical issue of how to treat the raised timber plinth under the choir stalls. Third, it will afford the opportunity of utilising the small void below the floor to discretely run the required audio-visual cabling which can be substantial. The floor will be raised to the height of the base of the choir stalls (about 100mm), similar to the height of the stone detailing at the base of the chancel screen. Carpeting has been selected as a finish to align with the carpeting in the remainder of the church as a whole and because of its benefits in terms of acoustics. It is proposed that there should be steps up to the front of this raised dais. This will both address the theological challenge of removing any separation between members of the congregation and those leading worship and reproduce the former central stepped approach to the chancel which appears in historical images of the interior of the church building.

(4) The pulpit and its domical cap

The church and the diocese hold little information about the pulpit and its canopy but their significance is highlighted in the listing description. Liturgically, the parish consider that the pulpit will neither be used nor appropriate in the planned reordering of the church. Whilst the parish appreciate that the pulpit is a piece of furniture of 'sacramental significance' which has played its part as an object which facilitated the expression of faith and worship, the pulpit has been redundant in this church for many years. It has no significance to the current congregation in terms of using this piece of furniture to express their faith or worship, and for many whom it is hoped will enter the church the pulpit is seen as a stumbling block, which is why many clergy across the country choose not to use pulpits. Theologically, this church wants to focus on a faith that is centred on the cross, is accessible to all, and where all who worship there are seen as brothers and sisters of Christ. The restoration of the nave, and its realignment along the traditional east-west axis, promotes this theology, but the perception of the pulpit promotes a hierarchy and a history that is problematic for many. Essentially the pulpit was a tool for preaching the word of God, elevating the speaker into a visible position and improving the acoustics. The reintroduction of a pulpit in years to come would only be as viewed as an 'idolised' reflection of former times, with no practical value now that its use has been superseded by microphones and monitors. In its present position, the pulpit obscures the focus of the memorial chapel, with its record of Blackpool holders of the Victoria Cross. The neglect of this memorial chapel has long been a bone of contention in Blackpool. The parish intend to restore the memorial chapel as a permanent and worthy place for ongoing worship. The continued storage of the pulpit in this area would prevent this restoration and re-use of the chapel. Although the pulpit and its canopy are in poor condition, the parish would still hope that they can be found a worthy home in another church with a more appropriate space and liturgical practices.

(5) The eagle lectern

As with the pulpit, the eagle lectern has been moved into storage in the presently unused memorial chapel. The eagle symbolizes the gospels, and specifically the Gospel of St. John, the fourth evangelist, with its wings spread to carry the scriptures. Following the Reformation, such lecterns were considered blasphemous, but eagle lecterns became fashionable again with the rise of the Oxford Movement. Originally many were made of brass but in the 19th century they were built of more humble materials, such as wood, as with the one at St John's. As with the pulpit, there are many theological arguments over the need for such an item of furniture in order to read God's word, and the need for this as an aid to worship in this church is not evident. Rather than continuing to store the lectern unused, the parish would seek permission to offer it to another church in the diocese or, if necessary, further afield.

(6) Relocation of the font

For liturgical use, the church's current portable font will continue to be used. This is a freestanding, wooden font, with a metal bowl, which can be used at the altar. However, as a permanent and worthy sign and symbol of baptism as the dominical sacrament of admission into the Body of Christ, the original stone font will be moved from a back room underneath the tower to a prominent, worthy, and well-signposted position in the welcome area adjacent to the main entrance to the church. It is neither appropriate nor practical to retain the original font cover which has been in store for many years. It is very dilapidated and, in any case, would detract from the open and welcoming symbolism of the font. The parish therefore seek permission to dispose of the font cover, hopefully to another church in the diocese, or, if necessary, further afield.

7. In addition to the Statement of Significance, a heritage consultant has looked briefly at the provenance and significance of the pulpit and the lectern. These are believed to be of some significance by virtue of the fact that they are likely to date from the original church fit-out but they are not considered to be unique or specially designed, and the lectern may be a catalogue model, based on a standard type widely available to purchase. The pulpit is recorded in the listing description but there is little further information relevant to its significance.

8. The parish have also obtained an illustrated assessment of the tiled floor in the chancel. This notes that the chancel is accessed via short steps leading up from the north and south of the crossing. The chancel tiles in this area are in a poor condition, and some of them are loose. Directly behind the chancel screen are two square patches where the tiles are missing. It looks like something was cemented to the floor in this area, possibly the original chancel stone work, which was removed when the screen was fitted. These square patches have been roughly cemented and then covered with red lacquered paint to blend in with the tiles. These patches are currently hidden behind the screen but, when this is relocated, the patches will be directly in front of the chancel steps in full view. The floor between the choir stalls leading to the sanctuary consists of a strip of unvarnished tiles with strips of varnished tiles either side. It is assumed that at some point, the tiles running down the middle of the chancel were covered by a carpet runner or mat. This area is in considerably better condition than the varnished tiles. However, projected increased footfall, and the use of musical equipment in this area, could damage the unvarnished and unprotected tiles. The PCC do not have the funds to renovate and restore the tiles in the chancel. Covering up the tiles with a false floor, laid over the pew platforms, will protect the tiles. Leaving the pew platforms in place will mean that the chancel could be returned to its present

state if desired in the future. The works include relocating the choir stalls and leaving the choir pew platforms in place. A false floor will be placed over the platforms to raise the floor to the level of the first step of the sanctuary. This will protect the tiles that are already in poor condition in areas where footfall has been heavy in the past. Should the chancel tiles remain uncovered, the choir pew platforms will also need to be removed to make the area level. The tiles do not extend under the platforms and so there will be two sizable patches of bare stone on either side of the chancel tiles. The edges of the tiles could get scuffed and damaged as people move from the untiled to the tiled area. The assessment notes that the tiles in the sanctuary are to remain uncovered so that some tiles will remain in view.

The Statement of Needs

9. According to the Statement of Needs, the congregation of St John's have an ambitious vision to become a town centre resourcing church, with a focus on reaching younger generations and planting churches across the Fylde Coast. In partnership with Blackburn Diocese, the Church Revitalisation Trust and the Church Commissioners, they will seek to grow their congregation to a weekly attendance of 400, with a range of midweek groups and activities. St John's is considered to be in the ideal location to grow a thriving, resourcing church for the region. It is situated on one of the main shopping streets in Blackpool and has a large pedestrianised square outside. Its building is in good condition structurally and already contains several useful facilities such as a commercial kitchen and breakout rooms. In addition, the PCC and congregation at St John's are enthusiastic, having been part of initiating the idea of becoming a resourcing church, and joining the Holy Trinity Brompton Network. The funding which has been made available for this project by the Church Commissioners' Strategic Development Fund is contingent on St John's functioning as a resource church and therefore the work on the building must reflect that ambition. The Statement of Needs addresses the current use of the church building and the planned pattern of services and events. It explains the needs of the parish, emphasising their hope of creating a welcoming and hospitable experience for their congregation, and guests, from the moment they step onto the church square. Using volunteers and signage, the parish hope to encourage people into the church and they therefore need an entrance and a foyer that continue that journey of welcome. To do this, they will create a transitional welcome space that allows people to be welcomed in an informal and vibrant environment. This will include provision for simple café catering and have a good connection with the nave. It will be wheelchair accessible and be able to be closed off from the nave to allow team members to resolve issues that might arise during services without causing disruption.

10. The previous renovations in 2005 added multiple facilities to the church building but it also reduced the service capacity from 1200 to only 120. This will be increased to approximately 300 on a regular basis and to 450 for one-off events. The current church seating is stackable and this will be maintained to make the space usable for Alpha and other events in different configurations. As the size of the worship space increases, the parish recognise that it will be important to make sure that it is also a space people want to spend time in. Whereas the previous renovations hid the majority of the church's distinctively Christian elements, the parish now wish to use some of that architecture to make the space more inspiring and attractive, and to reclaim the historic layout of the building. Whilst increasing the visual appeal of the space, the parish will use carpet and contemporary elements to make sure that it does not become too cold, echoey or formal. Where a more intimate reflective space is required, historic elements from the church will be used to create a war memorial chapel, shielded from the main space by an ornate screen.

St John's was one of the first churches in the country to install electric lighting, in 1915. Along with Blackpool's famous illuminations, and the desire to make the church an inspiring place for worship, the parish wish to do what they can to light the space well. The stage area will be lit separately from the congregation, and infrastructure will need to be installed for expanding the lighting provision and controlling the lights from a console. The Statement of Needs also addresses the upgraded audio-visual installation and the provision for parents, carers and children.

11. The national church has been in steady decline for several decades and is particularly losing connection with younger generations. For many congregations, it can be extremely difficult to re-engage with young people once their members are exclusively older. In Blackpool, the number of under 16s in church declined by 26% in one year between 2018 and 2019. However, national research shows that this trend can be reversed, through church planting and revitalisation, where churches are resourced with people, finances and support. To see this happen in Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, churches like St John's need to be enabled to focus wholeheartedly on growth, and reducing the average age of their congregations. This requires the focus of the leadership, the congregation and the building. The existing church building is functional and usable but is not currently well oriented to welcoming new young people into church. Consequently, this project is needed to bring the building into line with the church's vision to become a resourcing church for the region and reverse the trend towards ageing and decline. Without increasing the capacity and the quality of the building's main space, the parish are unable to host a large, growing community, capable of reversing church decline in Blackpool. Without reconfiguring the entrance and foyer, they are unable to welcome people as well as they could to lead to this transformational growth. Without providing excellent spaces for children, youth and pre-schoolers, the parish are unable to prioritise the needs of young people ahead of adults. Therefore, the changes proposed are necessary for the successful completion of the Resourcing Church project. Substantively different approaches to using the church are not an option as they would not qualify for funding from the Church Commissioners. In addition, there are very few church models in the Church of England that are proving as effective in reversing ageing and decline as resource churches. The proposed changes are common across the Church of England's resource churches and therefore it is difficult to see a realistic alternative that is proven to be as effective.

12. The parish recognise that as the congregation and the church team both grow, a stage area will be needed to accommodate musicians, preachers, and service leaders. This area should be raised in such a way as to make it visible to the whole congregation without causing too stark a separation between the congregation and the leadership team. To this end, the screen will be taken out of the chancel to make it a usable platform for leading services. This stage area will need ample connections for power and sound while hiding as much cabling and equipment as possible. The stage area should be carpeted to stop instruments from slipping and to deaden unwanted sounds. Removing or relocating the existing choir stalls will permit additional space for a music group, whilst avoiding the need for a chancel extension into the nave, which would reduce capacity.

Consultation responses

The Church Buildings Council

13. The CBC's initial advice was provided in the form of a letter dated 20 September 2021, following a visit to the church on 27 August. The CBC are supportive of the church's ambition to be "*a blessing to Blackpool*". They understand that funding for this project is constrained and that the present proposals therefore represent a first step in preparing the building to be a successful resourcing church, with possible further changes to be proposed in the future. The CBC are content with the proposals for the current bookshop area. They also acknowledge that bringing the font into the nave would be an improvement on its current location in the south-west heritage area, although they would have preferred the font to be located in spacious and well-ordered surroundings, being readily visible upon entry to the church, rather than being "*tucked in beside the main glass entry door to the nave*". The CBC have no objection to the removal of the partition wall between the chancel and the nave. The CBC wish to retain the memorial screen in front of the chancel within the church but they have no objection to it being relocated; and they consider that it would be appropriate to move it to the north transept so as to create a small chapel area. Since the chancel is not currently in use, the CBC have no objection to the pews being relocated. However, they do not consider carpet to be an appropriate flooring material in a church, especially in an area as formal and liturgically important as the chancel. The CBC would need the significance of the pulpit and the eagle lectern, currently in the north transept, to be established, and their removal robustly justified, before they could form any opinion on the acceptability of the proposal to dispose of them.

14. Following the first round of consultation, Mr Rob Andrews, the CBC's Church Buildings Officer, responded to the parish's revised proposals to reorder the church on 24 January 2022. The CBC are generally pleased to observe that the parish have taken their comments into account, and have felt able to revise their proposals in light of those comments. The CBC are content with the proposed relocation of the chancel screen and the chancel pews to the reordered war memorial chapel in the north transept, and they have no objection to the proposed relocation of the font to a prominent position in the entrance foyer. However, the CBC underlined their earlier advice that carpet was not considered an appropriate flooring material where there was decorative and historic tiled flooring in good condition. In the absence of greater justification to support the proposed timber deck which would sit over the tiles, and in particular reference to the unsubstantiated statement that the finish of the historic chancel floor was not compatible with the style of worship anticipated, the CBC could not support this aspect of the proposals. They ask for the tiled flooring to be retained and not covered up, as it is in good condition and is an important aspect of the historic liturgical high point of the church. Furthermore, in the absence of any satisfactory assessment relating to the significance of the furniture in the war memorial chapel, the CBC have not been able to form any opinion on the acceptability of the proposal to dispose of the pulpit and lectern presently occupying this space. As the need for their disposal could not reasonably be justified against their significance, the CBC could not support the proposed disposal of these objects.

15. In an attempt to address the CBC's concerns, the parish revised their Statement of Significance (as summarised above). They also explained that: (1) A step down to the prayer room to the north of the chancel was inevitable to avoid any amendment to the door and threshold. (2) Carpet had been selected as a finish to align with the church as a whole and because of the benefits of this finish in terms of acoustics. The use of carpet also has a

theological context, and its inclusion suggests a consistent flow from the nave to the chancel, visually breaking the barrier between those leading and the congregation, but more importantly reflecting an inclusive chancel and altar accessible to all. (3) Whilst it is considered unlikely that the church's worship style would revert to a more traditional approach, negating the need for a larger chancel area, the temporary nature of the raised floor would allow this to be removed, and for the pews to be relocated to their current position.

16. Mr Andrews produced a further response on behalf of the CBC in February 2022. The CBC remain supportive of the proposal to maintain the use of the chancel for leading worship but they feel that it is not necessary for each of the proposed changes in this area to be actioned. The CBC accept the proposed relocation of the choir stalls and chancel screen to the war memorial chapel, but they underline their earlier advice that the historic tiled flooring should be retained in the chancel. The decorated Victorian tiles were in good condition and were not understood to prevent the church from carrying out its mission in this area. The CBC note the parish's theological underpinning for introducing carpet on top of the raised timber floor, but they do not feel that this justification alone establishes a need for change when the historic tile floor is not found wanting. Furthermore, the CBC advise against introducing carpet in reliance on the precedent that carpet is already present in the church. Therefore, the CBC do not support the proposed intervention of the tiled chancel floor.

17. The CBC were grateful to receive additional information relating to the lectern and pulpit. However, this did not establish the significance of these objects but merely set out to describe, quite generally, their evolution throughout history. If the significance of the pulpit and lectern could not be ascertained, then this should be noted in the statement of significance. If neither item was considered to be of significance, then the CBC would not object to their disposal.

The Victorian Society

18. Mr James Hughes, the Victorian Society's senior conservation adviser, responded to the first round of consultation on 5 January 2022. Broadly speaking, the VS accepted and supported the principle of what was being proposed. Like the CBC, the VS recognised the potential benefits of the scheme and applauded the parish for their evident ambition. They welcomed the removal of the partition separating the chancel from the nave. The reunification of these spaces was a real benefit to an interior that had, spatially, suffered hugely by extensive subdivision. But while the VS accepted the principle of what was proposed, and recognised certain of its benefits, they did have concerns, as follows:

(1) The VS echoed the CBC's objections to the proposed installation of a raised floor and carpeted finish within the chancel. Ignoring for the moment the nature of the existing chancel floor, as the CBC had already highlighted, carpet was not considered appropriate in historic church interiors, and was contrary to the Church of England's own guidance. That would be so irrespective of the present floor; but the chancel possesses a handsome tiled floor of considerable character which makes a major contribution to the chancel. The VS would strongly object to it being overlaid by carpet, which would cause harm to the character and appearance of this most significant space, and for which there was no practical necessity. The presence of carpet elsewhere in the building could not justify or establish a precedent for carpet in the chancel.

(2) The VS rejected the suggestion that the chancel's tiled floor is somehow not compatible with the style of worship anticipated by the current church community. The style of worship is surely not predicated on the lack, or in any way undermined by the presence, of a tiled floor. Evangelical resourcing communities at Hastings, Andover and elsewhere cope perfectly well with them, as well as thousands of active, worshipping Christian communities around the country. One should also be mindful that the nature of the worship of the church's current community is almost certain to change over time.

(3) The VS were not opposed to the principle of a dais but there was no explanation in the documents of why one was required. Whilst the proposed installation of a raised floor in the chancel would dictate that the dais should be higher than it would otherwise need to be, this might present issues of access, especially when the chancel was intended to provide access from the main body of the church to the proposed prayer room on the north side of the chancel.

(4) Historic images show the pulpit and its accompanying canopy to be a very fine ensemble. The current version of the Statement of Significance failed to assess the significance of the pulpit and the lectern, and therefore failed to comply with the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules. A proper assessment of the provenance and significance of these items was required. Notwithstanding that lack of proper assessment, however, it was clear that these items, and particularly the pulpit, are fine pieces and amongst the building's most significant surviving liturgical fixtures. A compelling case needed to be made out to demonstrate that they could not be retained within a reordered church. As it stands, no such case had been presented, and the VS would object to their loss. On the basis of the information supplied, their retention (without undermining the entire scheme) should be achievable within a reordered space occupied almost entirely by moveable seating. They might not see regular use by the present community but the nature of the worship in this building will inevitably change, and it is quite conceivable that the pulpit could once more become a valued and utilised fixture.

(5) The relocation of the font was acceptable in principle, and its proposed location seemed sensible.

(6) In light of the date of the choir stalls (installed in 1915), the chancel screen and the wrought iron memorial chapel screen, the VS deferred to the Twentieth Century Society on the impact of the relocation of these significant liturgical furnishings. (I observe that although they have been consulted, the Twentieth Century Society have submitted no response.)

19. Following on from this initial response, the parish revised the original Statement of Significance and obtained a brief (but inconclusive) evaluation of the provenance and significance of the pulpit and lectern and an illustrated assessment of the chancel tiles (both as noted above). The original Statement of Needs was also updated and additional information was provided, setting out a clearer justification for the proposed changes to the church building.

20. Mr Hughes provided further observations from the VS by email dated 5 March 2022. The VS welcomed the additional details regarding the pulpit, and particularly its canopy, but it was disappointing that there was no suitably detailed or objective assessment of the significance of either the pulpit (and its canopy) or the lectern; and it was unacceptable that no current photographs of the canopy had been submitted. Of the two items, the pulpit was clearly the more significant item, emphasised by the unusual text in the building's listing description. It was a great relief to learn that the pulpit canopy remained in the church; and the VS would welcome detailed photographs of both pieces, especially the cover, of which they had only seen historic

images. The timeline included within the Statement of Significance suggested that the canopy had been installed in 1885 and the VS would like to know whence this information was derived. The canopy was clearly an intrinsic part of the whole piece, even if, in fact, it was of later date, and it was essential that it remained with the pulpit, irrespective of the pair's fate. Their careful restoration and reassembly should form part of any consented scheme, and this should be the case whether they were to remain in the building or to be moved elsewhere. Much like a fine organ, if the pulpit were to leave the building, then a new home for it ought to be identified prior to its departure. Whilst clearly in need of certain repairs, the tiled floor of the chancel was generally in pretty good condition. Its repair should not cost an inordinate sum; and its significance as the finest surviving area of historic flooring in the building demanded that it should be sympathetically treated. The parish claim that they do not have the financial ability to realise the careful repair and restoration of the chancel floor but it was not clear whether the parish had any accurate idea of how much this might reasonably cost. Given that this project was in receipt of funds from the Strategic Development Fund, it seemed unlikely, in the context of the whole scheme, that the cost of repairing the floor was either significant or unaffordable.

21. The church leader responded on 7 March explaining that the parish were already working on funding applications to cover an existing shortfall on the estimated costs of the building works and that they were in no position to attempt any extra works, regardless of their cost. The date of 1885 for the installation of the canopy had been taken from a previous statement of significance from 2005, which had cited *A Short History* by A.E. Howarth which, in turn, was based on Dr Iken's History from 1821-1940 and A. E Howarth's History from 1940-1986. The church leader was

... completely aware that the proposal doesn't satisfy everything the Victorian Society wants but I hope if you were able to visit, you would get a sense for how much of a dramatic improvement it would be for the space. In its current arrangement, the war memorial screen, the pews, the reredos, the painted ceiling, the carved wooden panelling, the font etc. are all hidden away and never seen. Under the proposed scheme, they would all be in pride of place and used in worship.

22. Mr Hughes's final response from the VS is dated 1 April 2022 and reads:

While we acknowledge the financial pressures of the project, we remain of the view that the concealment of the chancel floor is not necessary, and, moreover, that it would cause harm to the special interest of the building. We leave it ultimately to the Chancellor to determine the acceptability of this element of the scheme.

We are grateful for the additional information and, particularly, the photographs of the pulpit and its canopy. They demonstrate that these pieces are highly impressive and unusual. The canopy, in particular, is especially remarkable. Unfortunately, the photographs also lay bare the canopy's poor state of repair. What a shocking sight it is. It is hard to see how it could have suffered so terribly in storage. Is there any explanation for this?

We regret that there is still no proper assessment of significance of the pulpit and canopy. As it stands we struggle to see how the Chancellor, when they come to issue a Judgment in this case, could be satisfied that they understand their significance, or the impact on the significance of the church of their disposal.

Impressive liturgical furnishings such as these should not be simply disposed of without careful consideration for their future. Much like organs, for instance, when they are removed from churches, every effort should be made to find a suitable new home for them prior to their being removed, if consent for their removal is ultimately forthcoming. As we stated before, wherever they end up, it will be essential that pulpit and canopy remain together. As a last resort, the pieces might be rehoused through the central contents register managed by the Church Commissioners.

The DAC's Notification of Advice

23. The DAC's notification of advice is dated 4 March 2022. It recommends the re-ordering proposals for approval by the court. The DAC recognise, and they have advised, that these latest proposals are likely to affect the character of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Notice of the proposals has therefore been published in accordance with rule 9.9 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules (the **FJR**). No objections have been received in response either to the rule 9.9 notice or to the display of the usual public notices. The notification of advice also records that objections have been raised by the VS and the CBC which have not been withdrawn. The DAC explain that their principal reasons for recommending the proposals for approval despite those objections are:

The pulpit and lectern are not considered to be of particular historic or artistic significance and there are no records on the provenance of the items to suggest otherwise. The pulpit canopy is in a bad state of repair. The items are surplus to requirements, a barrier to bringing the side chapel into use as a memorial chapel, and have not been used since before the previous reordering. The PCC has indicated its intention not to use the pulpit in the future as it signposts a different liturgical tradition from that currently used in the church and it is not anticipated that the tradition of the church will change for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the DAC support the PCC in its desire to dispose of the pulpit, pulpit canopy and lectern.

The DAC expressed regret that the chancel floor is to be covered, especially as the floor has been hidden from sight since the previous reordering. However, the increased use of the area for leading sung worship could potentially damage the tiled floor and the acoustics for worship would be improved by using carpet in that area. The Committee was of the opinion that the floor needed some form of protection and that the current proposals were easily reversible should there be a need to reveal the tiles in the future. The works do not extend to the sanctuary and so the sanctuary tiles will remain in view. The DAC therefore support either the use of a good quality carpet on the raised wooden floor of the dais or for a good quality breathable carpet and underlay to be fitted directly to the chancel floor provided that this can be done without damage to the tiled floor.

Progress of the petition

24. Since both the CBC and the VS have objected to aspects of the reordering proposals, on 20 April 2022 they were each given special notice, in accordance with Part 9 of the FJR, inviting them to make any further representations on the proposals and to become a formal objector to

these proceedings by sending a completed Form 5 to the Registry within 21 days of the Registry's letter. On 26 April the CBC responded that they did not wish to become a party opponent; and no reply has been received from the VS (I suspect because of the church's Grade II listing). Although neither of these bodies has become a party to the proceedings, I have taken all of their previous representations into account when determining this petition.

25. I visited the church on Sunday 26 June 2022, and attended the principal Sunday morning service at 11.00 am, which was preceded by coffee and croissants at 10.30 am. This was a popular, music-led, contemporary service, geared towards families and young adults, but to which everyone was made most welcome. I estimated that there were approximately 100 people in the congregation; and I was impressed by their vibrancy and their clear enthusiasm for this form of worship. I had the opportunity, both before and after the service, to view the exterior and the interior of the church, focussing upon the present and proposed locations of the font, the north and south transepts, the chancel, and the sanctuary. In particular, I viewed the chancel screen, the tiled floor in the chancel and the sanctuary, the war memorial chapel, the pulpit (but not the domical cap) and the eagle lectern. In the tiled floor of the chancel, I noticed a small memorial tile recording that Richard and Elizabeth Braithwaite, and their daughters, Sarah, Ann and Harriet, were interred beneath. I invited a representative of the church to contact the Registry about the extent to which (if at all) descendants of the Braithwaite family had ever been known to have visited the site in the chancel of their predecessors' burial. By email to the Registry, the Reverend Andy Dykes, the church leader, responded that, to the best of recollections dating as far back as 1975, nobody had ever come to view the plaque. Until 2005, the plaque had actually been covered by carpet, which had been in place since well before 1975; and until the carpet was lifted in 2005, nobody in the church had actually known there was a plaque there.

26. Since, despite the objections received from the CBC and VS to aspects of these proposals, this is an unopposed faculty petition, I am satisfied that it is expedient in the interests of justice, and in furtherance of the overriding objective of the FJR, for me to determine this petition without a hearing, and on the basis of the considerable volume of written and illustrative material that has been uploaded to the online faculty system and is before the court. In determining this faculty application, I have had regard to all of the consultation responses from the CBC and the VS.

27. At this point, it is convenient for me to set out the legal framework by reference to which this faculty petition falls to be determined.

The legal framework

28. I preface this part of my judgment by explaining that the corollary of the ecclesiastical exemption from the requirement for listed building consent from the local planning authority before any works can lawfully be carried out to a listed church building is the need for the faculty system to apply equivalent levels of transparency, openness and rigour in maintaining appropriate levels of protection for that significant part of the national heritage that church buildings represent. As Chancellor Singleton QC (in the Diocese of Sheffield) explained, at paragraph 20 of her judgment in *Re All Saints, Hooton Pagnell* [2017] ECC She 1:

... churches, particularly listed churches, constitute a tangible and spiritual history which touches everyone including the people of the past, the present and the future including those from within and from outside our church communities and from

within and outside their geographical area. They connect us to each other and to those who went before us and to those yet to come by our mutual and continuing appreciation and enjoyment of their beauty and history. These buildings need and deserve to be preserved, renewed and improved, expertly, professionally and within a process open to public scrutiny. That is my understanding of the purpose of the strict law which applies to listed buildings generally and within the Faculty Jurisdiction as applied to listed churches generally and Grade 1 and 2* listed in particular. Within the church the preservation and development of beauty and history is undertaken to the glory of God.

29. Since the church of St John the Evangelist, Blackpool is a Grade II listed building, this faculty application falls to be determined by reference to the series of questions identified by the Court of Arches in the leading case of *Re St Alkmund, Duffield* [2013] Fam 158 at paragraph 87 (as affirmed and clarified by that Court's later decisions in the cases of *Re St John the Baptist, Penshurst* (2015) 17 Ecc LJ 393 at paragraph 22 and *Re St Peter, Shipton Bellinger* [2016] Fam 193 at paragraph 39). These questions are:

- (1) Would the proposals, if implemented, result in harm to the significance of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest?
- (2) If not, have the petitioners shown a sufficiently good reason for change to overcome the ordinary presumption that, in the absence of good reason, change should not be permitted?
- (3) If there would be harm to the significance of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest, how serious would that harm be?
- (4) How clear and convincing is the justification for carrying out the proposals?
- (5) In the light of the strong presumption against any proposals which will adversely affect the special character of a listed building, will any resulting public benefit (including matters such as liturgical freedom, pastoral well-being, opportunities for mission, and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship and mission) outweigh the harm?

30. When considering the last of the *Duffield* questions, the court has to bear in mind that the more serious the harm, the greater the level of benefit that will be required before the proposed works can be permitted. This will particularly be the case if the harm is to a building which is listed Grade I or II*, where serious harm should only exceptionally be allowed. I recognise that these questions provide a structure and not a strait-jacket. To adopt a well-worn phrase, they are guidelines and not tramlines. Nevertheless, they provide a convenient formula for navigating the considerations which lie at the core of adjudicating upon alterations to listed places of worship, namely a heavy presumption against change, and a burden of proof which lies upon the petitioners, with its exacting evidential threshold. Since the judgment of Chancellor Eyre QC (in the Diocese of Lichfield) in *Re St Chad, Longsdon* [2019] ECC Lic 5 (at paragraph 11) and my own judgment in *Re St Peter & St Paul, Aston Rowant* [2019] ECC Oxf 3, (2020) 22 Ecc LJ 265 (in the Diocese of Oxford), a practice has also developed of inquiring whether the same, or similar, benefits could be achieved in a manner less harmful to the heritage value of the particular church building concerned. At paragraph 7 of my judgment in the latter case I said the following (with reference to the fifth of the *Duffield* questions):

In considering the last question, the court has to bear in mind that the more serious the harm, the greater the level of benefit that will be needed before proposals can be permitted. It also has to bear in mind that serious harm to a church listed as Grade I or Grade II* should only be permitted in exceptional cases. In applying the *Duffield* guidelines, the court has to consider whether the same or substantially the same benefit could be obtained by other works which would cause less harm to the character and special significance of the church. If the degree of harm to the special significance which would flow from proposed works is not necessary to achieve the intended benefit because the desired benefit could be obtained from other less harmful works, then that is highly relevant. In such circumstances, it would be unlikely that the petitioners could be said to have shown a clear and convincing justification for proposals which would, on this hypothesis, cause more harm than is necessary to achieve the desired benefit.

Analysis and conclusions

31. The Statement of Significance contains little by way of any assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance of those parts of this Grade II listed church building that will be affected by them. None of the proposals will affect the exterior of the church building, its footprint, or its place in the townscape of Blackpool. The interior of the west end of the church, the nave and the aisles have already changed dramatically since the church was first listed in 1983. I am satisfied that there will be no harm to any of these areas of the church from the present proposals. I am satisfied that there can be no objection to the majority of the proposed works, including the relocation of the font to a prominent position in the entrance foyer (and the related disposal of the redundant font cover), the removal of the partition wall between the chancel and the transept crossing, and the proposed relocation of the chancel screen, and the chancel pews, to the reordered war memorial chapel in the north transept. Far from causing any harm to the significance of the church, these proposals will all serve to enhance the setting, the appearance, and the significance of the church building. The font will be moved to a more prominent, and theologically sound, position at the entrance to the church building; the view, from the worship area in the nave, of the beautiful stained glass windows within the apsidal chancel at the east end of the church will be improved; the chancel and the sanctuary will once again become part of the area used for worship in the church; and a traditional place for worship will be created in a war memorial chapel worthy of that description, and properly capable of commemorating those from the town of Blackpool who gave up their lives for others and in the service of their country. When I visited the church, it was apparent to me how dramatically these changes would improve the space, and worship, within the church building. I agree with the assessment of the church leader (in his response to the VS) that in its current arrangement, the war memorial screen, the pews, the reredos, the painted ceiling, the carved wooden panelling, and the font are all hidden away and never seen. Under the parish's proposed reordering scheme, these would all be in pride of place and used in worship. In all of these respects, the parish have readily overcome the ordinary presumption against change.

32. Despite all of these positive benefits, the DAC have advised that the proposals are likely to affect the character of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The clear inference from the terms of their reasons for recommending the proposals for approval, despite the objections received from the CBC and the VS, is that the harm that the DAC have identified results from the carpeting of the tiled chancel floor and the disposal of the pulpit (and

its canopy) and the lectern. Certainly, I can discern no other harm that may result from these proposals. It is appropriate to consider each of these aspects of the proposals in turn. In doing so, I remind myself that this church is listed Grade II, and not Grade I or Grade II*. I also bear in mind that the interior of the west end, the nave, and the aisles of the church have been drastically transformed since the building was first listed. However, this latter consideration can cut both ways: It may suggest that what remains of the original historic interior, and the furnishings, in the transepts and the chancel and the sanctuary should be the more zealously preserved. Alternatively, it may indicate that the parish should be permitted to implement further changes that are consistent with the transformations that have already taken place.

The raised dais and the carpeting of the chancel

33. In general, I recognise and accept both that carpeting is not an appropriate flooring material in a Grade II listed, mid-Victorian church, especially within an area as formal and liturgically important as the chancel; and that it is usually desirable that historic, decorative tiled flooring should be displayed rather than hidden from view. In the particular circumstances of the present case, however, I am entirely satisfied that the court should grant a faculty permitting the use of a good quality carpet on the raised wooden floor of a dais, or stage, to be installed over the floor of the chancel. On this aspect of the proposed reordering, I find the reasoning of the DAC, as expressed in their notification of advice, to be entirely convincing and utterly compelling. I am satisfied that a carpeted raised dais will cause little, if any, harm to the significance of the church as a Grade II listed building of special architectural and historical interest. The tiled flooring will remain; it will simply be covered up. This aspect of the proposals is entirely reversible; and the invisibility of the tiled floor in the chancel is mitigated both by the fact that the tiled flooring in the sanctuary will remain open to view, and by the clear and positive benefits that will flow from the other aspects of the proposals I have identified at paragraph 31 above. In some cases, it is possible sensibly to divorce one unsatisfactory aspect of proposals from the others, and to reject the negative whilst approving the positive. In the present case, however, I am satisfied that the proposal to install a raised, and carpeted, dais over the chancel floor is an integral, and necessary, part of the wider proposals; and in considering, and weighing, any resulting harm, it is appropriate to bring, and weigh, other, countervailing benefits in the balance.

34. Next, I must consider how clear and convincing is the justification the parish have put forward for implementing this aspect of their proposals. In my judgment, the parish have demonstrated, with clarity and conviction, that a carpeted raised dais needs to be installed over the chancel floor if the parish are to be able to promote their popular, music-led form of worship, to advance their mission to the people of Blackpool, and to play an appropriate part as a Christian hub at the centre of that town. The parish have made out a real need to expand their worship area into the crossing and the chancel if this church is to thrive and grow. They have made out a real need for a carpeted raised dais as a space from which to lead their particular form of worship. It is desirable to leave the pew platforms in place following the relocation of the choir stalls to the north transept because this will leave open the option of returning the chancel to its present state should this ever be favoured in the future. It will also avoid exposing to view the two sizable areas of bare stone on either side of the chancel tiles which would become visible should the pew platforms be removed since the tiled flooring does not extend under the pew platforms. However, this creates a need to install a false floor over the pew

platforms, raising the floor to the level of the first step of the sanctuary. This will bring the collateral benefits of protecting the surface of the tiles from any further damage and creating a space through which safely to run the audio-visual cabling needed to service the area from which services are led.

35. Finally, in case I am wrong in my assessment that a carpeted raised dais will cause little, if any, harm to the significance of this church as a Grade II listed building of special architectural and historical interest, I should consider whether any resulting public benefits would outweigh such harm. In doing so, I bear firmly in mind the strong presumption against any proposals which will adversely affect the special character of a listed building. I must also consider whether the same, or substantially the same, benefits could be obtained by other proposals which would cause less harm to the character and the special significance of this church. For the reasons I have already given, I am satisfied that the parish have demonstrated that the public benefits (in terms of the church's worship, mission, and community outreach) would outweigh any resulting harm to the significance of the church that will follow from the implementation of this aspect of the reordering proposals. I am also satisfied that the same, or substantially the same, benefits could not be obtained by any alternative proposals which would cause any less harm to the remaining character and significance of this listed church building.

The pulpit and canopy

36. I note that the CBC would not object to the disposal of the pulpit so long as it is not considered to be of any significance; and that the heritage consultant retained by the church has been able to discover little further information relating to its significance. The pulpit would seem to date from the original church fit-out in or about 1878, with the canopy being added a little later in 1885. I note that, based on the photographs of the pulpit and its canopy, the VS consider these pieces to be highly impressive and unusual, with the canopy, in particular, being especially remarkable, albeit in a poor state of repair. The DAC, however, point out that the pulpit (and the lectern) are not considered to be of any particular historic or artistic significance, and that there are no records on the provenance of these items to suggest otherwise. Since the pulpit and its domical cap are specifically mentioned in the listing description for the church, I am satisfied that their removal and disposal would cause some harm to the significance of this church as a Grade II listed building of special architectural and historical interest. Because they are no longer in their original position to the south of the chancel arch, and are unlikely ever to be returned there, or to form any part in the church's liturgy or worship, I would assess the harm that would be caused by the removal and disposal of the pulpit and its canopy as slight.

37. I am satisfied that the parish have supplied a clear and convincing justification for the removal and disposal of the pulpit and its canopy. As the DAC have observed, these two items are surplus to requirements; they present a barrier to bringing the chapel in the north transept into effective use as a memorial chapel; and they have not been used since before the previous reordering. The church leadership and the PCC have indicated their clear intention not to use the pulpit in the future as it represents a very different liturgical tradition from that currently practised in the church; and it is not anticipated that the traditions of the church will change for the foreseeable future. The DAC therefore support the parish in their desire to dispose of the pulpit and the pulpit canopy (and also the lectern). In relation to the pulpit and its canopy, I accept the reasoning and the conclusion of the DAC. I see no valid reason for preserving these two items 'in aspic', as though they were exhibits in a museum. They are of no practical use or benefit to or for this church; they represent an obstacle to its worship, liturgy, and mission; and

because of their size, their retention would hinder the conversion of the north transept into a properly functioning war memorial chapel. Notwithstanding the strong presumption against any proposals which will adversely affect the special character of a listed building, I am entirely satisfied that the resulting public benefits, in terms of worship, mission, and community engagement, will outweigh the resulting slight harm to the significance of the church from the removal and disposal of these two items of church furniture. I can identify no alternative to such removal and disposal. The parish will be required, by way of condition (as they have already acknowledged is their hope), to make every reasonable effort to find a suitable new home for the pulpit and its canopy, initially within the Diocese of Blackburn, and then elsewhere within this country.

The eagle lectern

38. The eagle lectern may be a catalogue model, based on a standard type widely available to purchase in the 1870s and 1880s. The VS recognise that it is less significant than the pulpit and its canopy; and it is not specifically mentioned in the listing description. However, it is likely that this lectern formed part of the original furnishings of the church; and the eagle has a particular symbolic association with the saint after whom this church is named. In my judgment, the removal and disposal of the eagle lectern, as one of the few remaining original items of church furniture, and because of its association with St John the Evangelist, would cause some slight harm to the significance of the church. Like the pulpit, the lectern is not in use and it is surplus to the church's present, and foreseeable future, requirements. However, unlike the pulpit, I am not presently persuaded that the lectern presents any barrier to bringing the chapel in the north transept into effective use as a memorial chapel. It will not occupy the same space as the pulpit; and it will not dominate the chapel in the same way as the pulpit would. I would hope that a permanent home can be found for it there. In my judgment, it is appropriate to defer any decision to authorise the removal and disposal of the lectern to await the actual re-ordering of the war memorial chapel in the north transept, in order to evaluate whether it can sensibly, and properly, be accommodated there. Should this prove impracticable, the parish may apply to the Chancellor (not his Deputy) for further directions.

Disposal

39. For these reasons, the court will grant a faculty for the proposed works as sought, but excluding the disposal of the eagle lectern. This is to be found a permanent home within the reordered war memorial chapel in the north transept. Should this prove impracticable, the parish may apply to the Chancellor (not his Deputy) for further directions. The faculty will be subject to the following conditions:

(1) Before commencing any works that would necessitate public worship being held in another building while the work is being carried out, the parish are to obtain the consent of the Bishop to alternative arrangements for public worship; and they are to comply with the terms of such consent.

(2) The parish are to make every reasonable effort to find a suitable new home for the pulpit (together with its canopy), and the font cover, initially within the Diocese of Blackburn, and then elsewhere within this country.

(3) Before commencing any works, the parish are:

(a) to satisfy the Archdeacon that they have secured sufficient funding to complete the works;

(b) to compile a proper photographic record of the tiled flooring in the chancel and of the pulpit and its canopy, and of the font cover, and deposit copies in the church records, the DAC's records, and the local Historic Environment Record for future reference by scholars and the local community. In order to comply with this condition, reference should be made to Historic England's Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice (May 2016); and

(c) to notify the church's insurers and comply with any recommendations or requirements they may make or impose.

(4) Should the terms of any grant or development funding require the parish to display a plaque recognising their contribution, the parish are to seek the approval of a DAC officer to the proposed location and fixing method of the plaque.

I give the petitioners permission to apply to the Court, by letter to the Registry for further directions as to the carrying-out of this faculty, or for the variation of this faculty, in the event of any particular difficulties presenting themselves.

40. In the first instance, the period allowed for these proposals to be implemented will be six (6) months from the date of the grant of the faculty.

41. In the usual way I will charge no fee for this written judgment. The petitioners must pay the costs of this petition, including any additional fees incurred by the Registry in dealing with this application.

42. In conclusion, I must thank the parish, the CBC, the VS, and the DAC for the evident care and attention that they have devoted to this faculty application. Their work has certainly contributed to a fully informed analysis and decision. I must also apologise to the parish for the length of time it has taken me to produce this judgment.

David R. Hodge

The Worshipful Chancellor Hodge QC

Wednesday, 27 July 2022

Historic photographic image looking east
with eagle lectern and canopies pulpit



Worship area in the nave looking east to the chancel

Former north-south orientation



War memorial chapel in the north transept
Looking east and showing the pulpit



War memorial chapel in the north transept
Looking west and showing the eagle lectern



Decorative tiled flooring in the chancel

Looking south



Choir stalls in the chancel

Looking west



View east towards the altar
Showing timber panelling and reredos

