

Pauline Marples takes a close look at church changes . . .

Character of historic St Alban's Church retained

ST ALBAN'S Church has seen a number of structural changes to the interior since it was first opened in 1911, first when the North Aisle was added in 1936, then after a disastrous fire in 1968 when a major refurbishment took place.

The inclusion of a toilet at the end of 2004 provided an essential need for the congregation and visitors, and alterations in the choir vestry made it possible to provide light catering facilities at church events.

Any alteration however large or small is not undertaken lightly, there is a vast amount of discussion, first with the PCC (Parochial Church Council), and then with Care of Churches at Southwell. The Diocesan solicitor has the final word and a faculty has to be granted before any work can commence.

For many months now St Alban's Church members have been discussing, planning, and organising moves to make their church building a more versatile place. A building that while it will be retained as a place of worship, will also have better facilities and



make it a place available for wider community use.

Since January 2008 many things have happened. In the main body of the church (the Nave) the rigid wooden church pews, which as many of you will know were very uncomfortable to sit on, have been removed. This has made the whole area

Report by Pauline Marples

more flexible, new chairs with cloth seating have been purchased and these can now be arranged to suit any event or occasion. The central floor area is paved with wood blocks surrounded by a new mulberry coloured carpet. This new carpet leads up into the chancel where the choir pews have been retained and to the high altar, and has the effect of joining the new with the old. The church has been redecorated and the walls are cream with a yellow tinge, making it very light but also warm. New electrics, lighting, heating and a sound and loop system have been installed

There is an interesting little story in relation to the new lighting, the Diocese did not approve the light fittings chosen by the PCC for the church interior so it was 'back to the drawing board' to find some new ones. The help of David Spencer, of JKE Installations Ltd, the principle contractor was sought who after scouring the Internet discovered some that he thought would be suitable in a church in America. He then contacted the church and asked for more information on these - imagine his surprise when an email came back to say they had been obtained

from a little place in Derbyshire England, called Chesterfield! Contact was made with this firm Northern Lights and as a result new light fittings were designed and manufactured by them to suit St Alban's Church. The lights really are beautiful and really add something special to the interior of the church. Both the lighting and heating have been installed with energy saving facilities.

At the rear of the church an area has been tastefully added to provide light refreshments when needed, this is referred to as a Tea Point. Old wood panelling has been cleverly used in this area. The vestry has also seen changes and newly installed stairs lead up into what was the roof space, making this now a very useful storage area.

For any of you who may feel sceptical that changes have been made to the church - fear not, the character of this historic church has been retained, 'it has lost nothing but gained a lot'.

The contractors for the electrical work and site management were JKE Installations Ltd, Shirebrook, Plumbing & Heating - Taft Plumbing & Heating Engineers, Mansfield, Sound & Loop System - Church Sound Services, Bridgewater, Somerset, Relaying of the Floor - Martin Kingdon, Southport, Merseyside.



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