

**Church:** St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield

**Interviewee:** A1

**Date:** Thursday, 25 June 2015

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1. NW: Thank you A1 for being willing to talk about this. Could we start... it would be interesting to know how long you've been connected with this church, and in what capacity or capacities.
2. A1: Well, at Blofield it's been six years and as a member of the congregation, as an ordinary member of the PCC, as a PCC secretary, but probably one of the main roles would have been the project management and fundraising, and the faculty procedure and permissions for the building projects here.
3. NW: Excellent, thank you. Can you just give me a feel for what role you think the building plays for the congregation, if that's not an obvious question, and the wider community.
4. A1: In terms of the congregation, it plays a part because it is the place that they worship, it is for them and for many the centre of the village. It's a very, very old church, and has been here though generations. For the wider community, it's slightly different now in a way because it [has] developed, but again they see it something that has always been here, they have seen it as being a centre of their lives in terms of weddings and baptisms and funerals. And then about three years ago that changed and became even more important because in the space that we've created at the west end we've put in a café and so we have 'Poppies Café' which you'll see branded around, and that has been an incredible success. And that draws in, on Wednesday mornings it draws in people – older folk generally – for coffee, and they spend a couple of hours here, so it really has become one of the key places that you can do that in terms of fellowship. And that's all community and I think in fact probably they would say to you that something like three quarters of the people who come are not church people.
5. NW: And just the context of Blofield; do you know roughly how many people the population is.
6. A1: No. I could tell you. We've got it, yes, we've got it. I can't remember what the 2011 census said.
7. NW: And the congregation numbers?
8. A1: They're pretty steady. I mean on Sundays they have here something like 60, not a huge number of children at the moment, and on Wednesdays we have a steady 20, because we have a Wednesday service as well, and that's been steady through the whole of our vacancy.
9. NW: Excellent, thank you. You mention building projects plural. Could you just outline the different things that...
10. A1: So, going back four years, which is really where I came into it, it was this very, very large building that was empty except on Sunday mornings and Wednesday mornings, and there was nothing else really. We had concerts, and we had some

events, but effectively it was just quiet and empty, and the heating was ver, very poor, almost non-existent. And then some four years ago, a little bit more, the rector then quite reasonably could see that something else needed to happen here and we had a lot of space that we weren't using, so the first project that we came up with really was to develop the very big space which is at the west end...

11. NW: Behind that screen?

12. A1: Yes, behind the Georgian screen, where the font lived. And so we went through a procurement process for architect, for builders, that took some time, and came up with some plans which were to move the font and then develop the west end with a gallery above and that would give space for all sorts of children's work, art work, local history work. We had a whole programme of that. And we engaged with our DAC to start looking at the plans; they were really quite far-reaching, the plans, and a considerable amount of money. And we started to fundraise, even though the plans had not been signed off yet, but we still started to fundraise and we'd had, I can't remember, maybe six months before, maybe a bit longer than that, we'd had a quinquennial inspection, and it did identify that there were some problems with the tower, but it didn't identify that they were urgent. And we'd started to fundraise, and we noticed that flints were dropping off the tower. At that point our architect was retiring, and so we got a new one, and we had another review, and it was very serious. The tower had developed really quite big cracks inside and outside, and we had serious problems with the south aisle roof, which was leaking and needed part replacing, so we went from one project which was almost development, and something new, to 'Oh, OK we have to stop, because there's something now wrong with the church.' We had enough money to move the font, so at least we had created a space at the back, and the font is much better here [at the east end of the north aisle], in terms of our liturgy. And we had a little bit left over, that was the start of a fund to put in new heating. So there were a number of things going on at the same time. So the heating started to come in, and we got the funds for that, the font was moved, the space was created, but we couldn't go back to the big project, because at that point we engaged with English Heritage, very successfully, and it was quite clear then that this project to make these repairs would be in the region of £120,000. So we couldn't do anything else apart from the repairs. So really the projects were moving the font, putting in a new heating system, the whole repair project for the south aisle roof, the rainwater goods on the north side, the tower internally and externally. And then separate but connected to that, English Heritage said 'We have now discovered that two of your wall monuments are not secure, and as part of the condition of the grant you must repair these, but we won't give you a grant to repair them, you have to find that. So there's a little interesting special project that came along at the same time. So all those different projects, whether they were development focused, or repair focused, came along. And then having done that really we'd exhausted some of the fundraising, because as you may know when you apply to certain funds you can't go back to them for a number of years, quite rightly. And we'd also exhausted our church community and our local community

in terms of their giving, so we didn't think we could then go back and try and ask for money for the development, and then our incumbent left; he went somewhere else.

13. NW: What was his name?

14. A1: Paul Cubitt; he's up at North Walsham. And so really it got put to one side. But a little piece of what we'd intended by this project came out of it, because we'd opened up the space at the back, and that's where we put the café. So something came from that. And then the project that is just going through faculty now is... You'll see that the actual floor at the back is really really poor: dirty, cracked, we can't keep it clean and it's uneven, and so what we're doing now is looking at a faculty and a project to replace the flooring and also to renovate the kitchen, so once again really a repair project, but sort of development, because we get to a point where we may not be able to use the west end because the flooring will be too dangerous for older folks. So that's the projects here. And my two at Hemblington as well, which actually are community development, they're not repairs.

15. NW: Right, thank you. I don't know whether this is easy to answer or not, but if you hadn't had the change of inspecting architect and the flints falling off the tower and the new quinquennial inspection, so you didn't have the tower works and the south aisle roof works, would you have been able to proceed with that more ambitious project?

16. A1: I think so, I think so, I mean there were some people, and still are some people, not only in our church but in many churches that don't really want change. But I think that certainly the incumbent was passionate about it, and a number of the congregation could see that if we were ever going to do children's work, teenage work, encourage more people to come in, art groups and such, use the church in a bigger way, that we had to create some better use of the space, and I think people saw that. Would it have looked exactly like the early stages? I don't know, because we'd only just engaged with the DAC, and they had views about how far the top level would come out, where the stairs would be, we started to talk about lifts as opposed to steps, light sources and what have you. So we had quite a long way to go, but yes I believe it would have.

17. NW: And obviously the incumbent, Paul Cubitt, was important to the vision of the project; it would have survived his departure, do you think?

18. A1: I don't know, I mean I just don't know. Because by that time we'd exhausted a lot of the financial sources, so unless there'd been some huge legacy... you know, you can only go back to the community so many times, so I can't really tell whether it would have continued or not. I mean, if it had been in process, then it would have, because in terms of fundraising, he was never involved in the fundraising, you know he just had a vision for how the alteration of the building would fit with our mission. It couldn't have been initiated without him being here really, because I don't know where the money would have come from so soon after you know £120,000 of grants.

19. NW: Do you think the project would have been initiated at all without him, regardless of the timing and the money.
20. A1: I don't know. I mean, he certainly had a passion for not... you know he would often say that this church has just changed constantly over generations and this was naturally a way for it to change again. And he really had a passion for not leaving a church building empty and not used for the bulk of a week, and so there must be a number of clergy who feel the same way. He had the energy for it, certainly, and as far as I was concerned because I did the fundraising and faculty, he was very supportive in that way, so he rolled up his sleeves and got involved. I don't know if other clergy are the same or not; some are and some aren't probably.
21. NW: Are you still in an interregnum?
22. A1: Oh, no, no, no. We now have a new rector, since two months.
23. NW: Excellent. Thinking about the building, how would you describe its character; what does it mean to you?
24. A1: Do you mean in a practical sense, or... Well I can tell you what it says to me in a spiritual sense. And you haven't seen Hemblington, so you won't quite understand, but Hemblington is a Saxon round tower in the middle of the fields. It has none of this, it just has whitewashed walls and it has no stained glass, none of these trappings at all. So this church says, God says to me here, 'I am God, and I am powerful, and I awesome; kneel down and worship me.' And I gladly do it, I have no problem. At Hemblington God says 'I love you very much; come and have a cuddle'. And so because I worship in both, I am more comfortable at Hemblington, this is a stunning building, beautifully kept, I think it could be used more, people love it, many weddings here, and funerals and such. I think people are very comfortable here, they don't worship here on Sundays. I think it's a good size, it's neither too – not from my perspective – I think people would people say it's not too big or too small. Some people here would say, well, Hemblington we don't like it, you're a bit too close together, for me, I like being close together, so I like using the chancel because it's ... closer together. So I think it says to people we're constant. We are, you know... The church, it is continuity, the building, because we are the church, the building is continuity; it has stood here all this time from 1400 with various changes and things. I think that probably people [who] even don't worship here rely on it to be the place to come when they need somewhere quiet to be.
25. NW: They don't...?
26. A1: They do.
27. NW: Oh they do, sorry.
28. A1: So even if people are not necessarily worshippers you still quite often if I'm in and out I'll find somebody here just sitting quietly. Because when it's like this, it is nice and quiet. So I don't know if that really answers the question but...
29. NW: And it's interesting what you were observing about comparing the two buildings; presumably that then in part shapes the community that uses the building?

30. A1: Uhm...
31. NW: If the building is saying something quite different.
32. A1: Yes, I suppose so, in that we have quiet days; the quiet days always take place at Hemblington, because it's surrounded by fields, and you get birdsong and what have you, tractors and stuff like that. Whereas this lends itself to larger events, and you find that with weddings, if it's a small wedding it tends to go to Hemblington, if it's a bigger wedding it's quite obvious that it comes here. So I think the two churches complement each another in a way. If you like to worship very quietly without a lot of fuss, Hemblington's the place; here it's very noisy and very bustly, and there's lots going on, but some people like that, some people say 'We don't want to go to Hemblington, it's too quiet.' We're very fortunate to have two churches that are really quite different.
33. NW: Is it a multi-parish benefice?
34. A1: Yes. And we've just added, just legal on 1st June, added another church to make three. So yes, he's got three now.
35. NW: Thinking about the process, and I don't know how much you'll remember of the larger scheme that happened before, but in terms of the process of getting permission, the faculty process which obviously you didn't go all the way through, but started your consultation: how would you describe that process, was it a good process?
36. A1: Yeah. I mean I come from an international business background. I'm a creature of structure and process, and I believe that if there's a process, all you have to do is follow the process and it works. It's only when you try and cut corners, or do things too fast, or what have you. So in terms of this, and in terms of Hemblington, where I'm just finishing a big project now, because the process is more or less the same, there it was external planning permission, it was Broadland Council as well because we extended. But really, you know, the diocese lays down the process, and I sit on diocesan groups, and it's laid down step by step what you do, and if you follow that, no I didn't have a problem. And I actually go to other churches to advise them on the process on behalf of the diocese as a lay person and no, I think if you keep to 'Look we think we want to do this; DAC people can you just come and can we just talk to you about what we're trying to do', right at the beginning, it's fine. The process doesn't work when you spend an awful lot of money on all sorts of plans and what have you and then engage them half way through, and then wonder why you have to go back and start again. So, I didn't find a problem with the process. It takes a long time. I just wish you could shorten it a bit, because of all the other permissions we have to get, and it's changed slightly now, we have to get all the other permissions like, here, we would be English Heritage, SPAB, Georgian Society, Victorian Society and Church Building[s] Council here, now we have to get all those *before* we actually apply for a certificate of recommendation, whereas it used to be the other way round, but it doesn't matter. It is a long process. I mean I tell people to allow at least 3 months if everything's fine. But if you just look at what they ask you, and just give them

what they ask you, rather than leaving bits out, or thinking they don't need it, or thinking for them, it seems to me it's worked fine. And it's worked for me, I guess I've done six faculties in five years, different sorts...

37. NW: Quite a seasoned campaigner then!
38. A1: You just do what it says. And the great thing is that you can phone them up. So I work very closely with a woman called Caroline Rawlings, and they've just changed their senior person to Matthew [McDade], and that's brilliant, that's absolutely brilliant. I can just... in fact this morning we had a make an emergency call to the archdeacon this morning at Hemblington, but I found, I just find people just so incredibly helpful. And I ring them quite a lot of the time, and tell others to ring them, so I never had a problem with the process.
39. NW: You mentioned various stakeholders like the Victorian Society, Church Buildings Council etc; did you have meetings with them here, did you get that far?
40. A1: Sometimes, what normally happens is that those people would be represented on the DAC, and so if it's a big project like this, what happened was that we would ask the DAC to come, and we would have the most sketchy of drawings, because you want to limit the amount that you ask an architect to do, because it costs. So we would always start with just sketches and so right at the beginning what we said was 'We want to develop our west end, may we ask for a visit please'. And you can send them some stuff in advance, and then they come, and in that group will be representatives of those different groups. Sometimes you'll find that say the Church Buildings Council at that point will be representing SPAB as well. And then they'll talk about what their issues are, so the idea is that you don't waste money or time, that you just step through. So if at that point they say 'There's no way you can have this scheme, we're not having it', then you know where you stand. If they say 'Well we don't really like this part', and I think that's where it takes the time, because you don't want to get to a point where you're then asking for formal approval from Church Buildings Council, and at that point they say we don't approve it, because then you've spent an awful lot of money on drawings, not just sketches, but the actual drawings. So the way that I always worked was that I would make quite sure that I was ready to go before I actually spent the money on the drawings. But yeah, they come... there'll be people in the DAC group, because they come as about 8 or 9 people when they come with their specialists as well.
41. NW: So in terms of the bigger project, you were going through the process, and it was OK as far as it got in that respect?
42. A1: Well it was very early stages, it really was. And I remember, it wasn't issues, but there were things like 'You must be careful about lighting. You must be careful about this, you must be careful about this. You know, this staircase doesn't...'. So it was typically what you would find at the very early stages of a major project. And I mean, we've got drawings, but sketches, I don't think we..., no we never got to drawing stage, but we got to sketching stage, and we stopped.
43. NW: Do you know what value was being put against the project as a whole?

44. A1: ...I can't remember now. There was a value, there was, because of the fundraising, we needed to know without the project being finalised, what the project might be. And we used a QS [Quantity Surveyor] to try and give us a value for that, and I cannot for the life of me... it was a large amount of money. Because it involved the floor as well, and the kitchen as well, because it was all going to be part of it... I mean I can look it up, I've got it, I can tell you.
45. NW: Thank you, that would be helpful. Obviously within the church you have priorities for the building and the way you want to use the building; for the folk from those other stakeholders, what do you think is important about the building for them, and is it compatible, or is there potentially a tension there?
46. A1: It can be compatible. I mean I think it's a compromise. I think for them, what they were looking at is... That screen is Georgian, so what the Georgian Society was saying was 'Look we cannot approve anything that means you're going to cut up the Georgian screen'. English Heritage really were looking at a grade 1 heritage building and making sure that we weren't going to make holes in a wall. So I think what they were doing was to protect and conserve that heritage, and so was SPAB, but at the same time they knew and they were very much on board with what we intended to do inside it, you know the art groups and what have you. So I think that those societies actually want the buildings to be used more, but they also want the balance that we don't just pull out features that are hundreds and hundreds of years old.
47. NW: So you would say that they understood what you were trying to achieve...
48. A1: Yeah.
49. NW: ...with the building?
50. A1: Yeah, they said they did, yes, yeah. But, you know, [they said] 'That's absolutely fine, but we don't want you to do this, and we don't want you to do that, and you know you cannot...'. I remember with the Georgian screen, they said that we could only come within a certain distance of the screen; we couldn't attach anything to it, because they... And the doors. There was a big issue with the doors.
51. NW: The doors through the screen?
52. A1: Yeah, yeah. We wanted to replace them with glass, and in fact the doors and the piece that goes above it are not Georgian, they were added later. So it's those sorts of things, but there was never any entrenched views about anything.
53. NW: That's encouraging. Some reflections on the process and what you've been through. What do you think you learned, and do you think your ideas changed as a result of that process, or...?
54. A1: It did, because, my experience as a project manager in a corporate world, I brought that to a church environment; it doesn't work, it absolutely doesn't work, because the way that we're taught in project management is that to get from A to B is pretty much a straight line, and we put key indicators in there to make quite sure that we're... It doesn't work here, and the speed was different. You know, I'm used to asking for project end dates, and that is the project end date. It doesn't

happen here, there are too many variables. And so I learned to take a slower approach, to take a bit more of a sort of scenic sort of route, knowing where we were going to get to. A huge amount more engagement with local community and people that use the church, whereas if you've got corporate projects you do some of that, but... So I think personally for me, I brought aspects of project management, but then changed that to adapt to the speed at which the DAC works, the registrar works, the chancellor works, the societies work... So I think that's what I tell people now. And I had a completely false expectation of this time frame. I can remember saying to people we'll have this done at the end of the year, and wondering why they laughed. And I know now, that whatever the project is you just double the timeframe. We're running two months late at Hemblington at the moment, and that came completely out of the blue, there's nothing we can do about it.

55. NW: What do you think the impact of the project in terms of the fact that the project stopped, do you think that has had an impact on the church community, or not?
56. A1: I don't think so, because we were able to at least put the café in. And it hadn't gone quite far enough. We did an open day for the project to show people what we were trying to do. And you know, the local community and the church community; people loved it. I remember them saying 'We like this idea, as long as there are quiet periods; don't fill the church up with activities every day of the week, because then where do you get the private time to come in?' That was the only really negative feedback, apart from the ones who didn't want any change at all.
57. NW: So there were some that didn't?
58. A1: Oh yeah, oh yeah, there still are. Yeah. They like 'Poppies', but they don't want anything else. But I've come across that in so many churches. So I think in terms of, were people disappointed when it stopped: No, no, I mean they can see this little bit of advancement, and we don't know what's going to happen next in terms of our new rector. It's far too early. Whether he says well actually... Because the piece that's missing for us is, I know it seems as though we've got a lot of space, but the space to do things at the same time as the service. So on a Sunday morning we've got nowhere for children's' groups, apart from inside the church, which is fine, but nowhere for teenage groups. And in Blofield there's not a lot of teenage space.
59. NW: Does the church have any church hall or...
60. A1: No...
61. NW: ...anything like that?
62. A1: ...this is it.
63. NW: It's just the church.
64. A1: Hmm, yes.
65. NW: If you were approaching that project a second time around, would you do anything differently. I mean you've obviously done several faculty processes; would you do anything differently do you think?



66. A1: I don't really know. I mean... I'm completely tied to this thing of stepping through the process a piece at a time. I would never take short cuts, and I didn't take a short cut with this. I suppose there were some small things that we did, in that in a way maybe we started some of the fundraising a bit too early...
67. NW: What was the problem with that then?
68. A1: Well, we created these really quite glossy brochures, for which we did get a grant, we didn't pay out our own money, but we created these brochures that outlined the project in probably a bit more detail than we should have at that stage. We sort of jumped the gun a little bit. And if I did it again, and I have done it again, I would wait until we'd got a bit more into the DAC process and what have you before I start the fundraising.
69. NW: Because it's about delivering on a promise, and you don't know whether you can make the promise yet?
70. A1: Yeah. But then... I suppose I just balanced it. But at Hemblington it's an extension, so we had to get Broadland planning and archaeology, because we're digging in our churchyard, so there I made sure that I'd got everything lined up and ready before I started the fundraising. It's a fine balance. Some fund managers, especially if they're church-based funds, don't want to listen to you until you can show them a faculty, because why would they give you money if you don't have permission to do it? So it's sort of a balance. There's probably other stuff that I learned here, and it's in there somewhere, and it will come out if... Sometimes you find that consulting for somebody, some of it will come out, I'll remember some things that I did here. One of the big things that I talk to people about now is that I did this on my own. I had the rector, but I didn't have a team, and so the fundraising and the project management, the project management I did with the architect – but the fundraising and a lot of the other stuff I did as one person because nobody else came forward. And what I say to people now is that you mustn't do that, you absolutely mustn't do that. If the church can't provide a team, then there's something wrong, deep down. And I make sure that people now don't just try and do it on their own, because it's very punishing.
71. NW: What would you regard as your ideal team?
72. A1: Probably what I've got at Hemblington, which is four. Which is somebody that practically knows what a brick looks like; I've learned loads of things about medieval church architecture, but somebody who knows the terminology for the architect to speak to. My architect taught me, I mean it's not her role to teach me what a quoin is. And then the treasurer in there, that can take care of the [money]. And it's worked well for us, a little four person team; you don't need much more than that.
73. NW: And working with the architect on the bigger scheme, was that a good relationship?
74. A1: Yeah. We went to bid, and we decided that we would go to bid for the... There were two needs; one was for the project, and one was the church architect, because the guy had retired. So I devised a procurement process where... when

we went to bid, the actual bid document was sort of like in two parts: one was for the project, and described the project, and the other one was for the church architect. And we sent it out, and the DAC helped us, to a number of architects, and we said you can either bid on both, or bid on one, or bid on the other. And that's what they did. And then we sat down as a panel and we looked at that, and interviewed them, and checked references and what have you. And the way it turned out was that a company called JBKS were really, really good on the bigger project, but didn't really want to know on the church architect, they weren't church architects. But there was a woman, Ruth Brennan, who at that point belonged to a firm, but she came along, and her project plan was really quite good, and her church architect plan was really good, but she was just about to leave the firm and go out on her own, and we decided that it was too early to do that, so we appointed JBKS to the main project, Ruth Brennan to be the church architect. But in fact as the time's gone on, because she's built the business and what have you, we now use her as the project architect as well, and that works perfectly well because there's nothing that she doesn't know, and she has the skill in terms of heritage buildings, so we're perfectly happy, and she's on the DAC preferred list, because they've just redone their list. So we're quite confident in that. But it was a formal process, it took us, I don't know it took us about seven months. English Heritage require that you go to bid. You have to go to bid for three architects...

75. NW: If you're going to get grant money.
76. A1: Yeah, yeah. It's changed a little bit now because English Heritage now is Heritage Lottery Fund [Historic England], remember, and this was just before they moved over. But I think it's the same process that they require that you do get three formal bids for the work. And then they have a look at those, you just don't get one.
77. NW: And thinking about the process as a whole that you've been through to get the faculty, this 'scenic route' that you have to go through, if you – the magic bullet question – if you could change one thing about it, about the ease with which one can change historic buildings, what would you change... to make that easier?
78. A1: Well, I see the point in having the process. So, the thing that I found really very tiresome they've actually changed, and that is that the faculty process has gone online. It drove me mad photocopying huge numbers of documents, and so the bit I hated in the process which was these bundles of documents that you had to do, that's now moved online. I mean I think that they're going through an alpha stage, but it's imminent. I see the point of having that process in place, because I can well imagine that you could have either a rector or you could have a PCC that would suddenly make major alterations to a building, and it's interesting because as... We found here in the tower that, we don't know when, but at some stage somebody had used an awful lot of cement. Well, when they did that, they probably didn't know any better, and so they used cement, and now of course we know that we have to use special materials, and they're checked and what have

you, and we do the best we can right now to get it right. And so if there was no-one to advise us, we could actually be doing something now that could almost be quite criminal, and we wouldn't even know we were doing it. Like maybe our Paston monument. It wasn't actually falling off the wall, it was sort of OK, but someone said... It cost us £10,000 for the two monuments; it was all grants, and someone said, 'Well, maybe what we'll do is, we'll just pull it off the wall and re-plaster it; it'll be fine'. Well, no! You can't do that, so I understand why these processes are in place, because if that had been done, that would've been completely lost. It's a unique monument, the Paston monument, whereas faculty cut in and they said, 'It's a different process for monuments. This is how you do it, these are the people you have to ask', and we went to London, and what have you, and got that. So I do understand why the process is there.

79. NW: So if I could paraphrase what you said, for you the process is a good one, not least because it gives you access to people who know absolutely the right thing to do with what is an important building...
80. A1: To protect a heritage building, yes. Yeah, I think that's probably right.
81. NW: So you wouldn't change it then, the process?
82. A1: No, no. But you might talk to others, and they may say, 'This is ridiculous, why do we have to do this?'. But that's just my perspective I suppose. I've done enough of them. That's what I tell others. I mean my experience [is that] whenever you cut around the process, it always comes back to grief; that's what I found.
83. NW: So I suppose a supplementary question: you've, partly with your experience from previous working life, and partly through doing a number of faculties, you've got a really useful set of experience within the wider Church, so the question for parishes that don't have somebody like you, is how do we get what you know more widely spread?
84. A1: Well it's hard, it's hard. Because if you think about the Diocese of Norfolk, it's 652 churches, the majority of which are medieval, and Matthew [McDade] heads up this group – with this awful title – called 'Church Ambassadors'; we're changing that, it's dreadful, absolutely dreadful, and it's a collection of people like me. But there's only ten of us, with slightly different experiences, some far greater than mine, and what have you, and the idea is that if someone reaches out to the DAC to say 'I'm in trouble, I need this, I just don't know even where to start. You know, I'm 80 years old, and we've got a congregation of ten', and what have you, then Matthew would try and find one of us to go and talk to them, not to do the work, you can't do that, I'm a reader in training, I can't do it. But we've talked about it, what do we do, and not come to an immediate solution. What I do, what I've proposed, is that maybe you could tackle it deanery by deanery. So if in a deanery you had a person that had a bigger knowledge then you could help the deanery, rather than me going to the west of Norfolk to talk to somebody. And what I did in our deanery was, I had this little spreadsheet that I sent out. I found some fabric officers or a [PCC] secretary, or a... not an incumbent; priests, clergy shouldn't be involved at all. And I found key people in churches, and I sent them this little

spreadsheet to say, 'These are the things I have identified that might be experiences, can you tick if you've had the experience?'. So it had like DAC, and then it had the amenity societies, and it said things like 'Have you got a QI, have you got a Statement of Need[s] and Significance?' And there were about 30 of these questions, and they ticked yes or no, and then I put those all together as a little bundle, and sent it back out again. So the idea was that if somebody wanted a new builder, just a jobbing builder, that they could look at this, and they could then... it didn't tell them who the builder was, but it would tell them which church it was, and people have rung me to say 'I don't suppose you've got anybody that you know who does stained glass?'. We do, we broke our window, so it's moving the information around. So there are things that you can do to help, but we don't have... I don't see that anybody's ever going to have the time to actually do the work for somebody. I mean I can say 'The processes are mine; you look at the way they've laid it out, you follow the process, this is where you go to find the funds. Be careful with your fundraising applications.' So I can do in about two hours an overview, but I just don't have time to do more than that.

85. NW: And whose idea was the 'Church Ambassadors' group?

86. A1: I joined a year in. They used to have... on a three year appointment they had a woman called Jenny Hawkes – she's in Cambridge now, she moved – and it was her passion and the original project was called 'Open Churches', because there's a lot more open churches now than there ever were before. So the diocese employed her on a three year contract to work out ways to get churches to open, and that's where it began, and then I think it moved into repairs, and what does your church look like, and what have you. So she started this group, and I joined it part way in, and then the three year contract, there was no more money for it, so one of the archdeacons took it over. Erm wrong! Clergy don't do that, that's not what we want them there for, and then fortunately it moved over and it moved to Matthew [McDade], so it's in exactly the right place now. Because in a way this part of it is a business part of it, it's a corporate part of the church, rather than the other part of the church, which is spiritual and what have you. So that's how it began. It keeps losing focus a bit. I mean everybody has a will for it to work, and everybody wants it to work, but there isn't unlimited resource. Matthew fire fights in a way, with one man trying to cover going to see churches and trying to give them advice and what have you.

87. NW: Thank you A1, I think we've covered enough ground, unless there's anything else you'd like to say.

88. A1: No, no.

89. NW: I'm very grateful for your time, thank you.

90. A1: You're welcome.