

# Statement of Need

## Church & Community Project

### General information.

Parish: Blofield  
Dedication: St Andrew & St Peter's Church  
Benefice: Blofield & Hemblington within the Deanery of Blofield  
Diocese: Norwich  
Address: St Andrew & St Peter Church,  
Church Road,  
Blofield  
Norfolk  
NR13 4NA  
Grid ref: OS Reference: TG 33530 09193  
Local Planning Authority: Broadland District Council  
Listing: Grade I

### [i] Location and setting.

Blofield is a Broadland village five miles east of Norwich. There are two separate areas of habitation, Blofield village and Blofield Heath which is contiguous with Hemblington. At the 2001 census the population for the parish of Blofield was 3221. Blofield village is situated to the south and contains the Parish Church and the Rock Community Church. There is a Post Office and stores, farm shop, leisure and camping business, newsagent, florist, hairdresser, craft shop, two garages and the Kings Head pub. The village has a number of small businesses. In addition there is a primary school (Blofield CP – roll 215 – one of Norfolk's top primary schools), day nursery, preschool group, doctors' surgery and library. The Margaret Harker Hall commemorates a local benefactress. There are smaller meeting facilities in the Old Courthouse where various groups meet (including Brownies). The Sea Scouts, Explorer Scouts, Cubs and Beavers have their own headquarters (where the Rainbows also meet), as well as a water base in the next village of Brundall. Plantation Park is the home of Norwich United and has bowls facilities. Blofield United play on the pitch behind the Margaret Harker Hall. Two areas of sheltered housing and a residential home accommodate the elderly. Recently much new housing has been built in the village but has not overwhelmed the older buildings. There are concerns within the village on the proposal to build an extra 194 houses.

A bridge crosses the A47 and leads to Blofield Heath with its pub, 'Two Friends', Post Office and stores and primary school (Hemblington CP – roll 144). There is also a garage, garden centre and recreation field and hall/social club (with a bowling green) known as Heathlands, which also has pre-school groups. A thriving centre for the elderly, run by volunteers, takes place on Mondays.

St Andrew and St Peter's is the Church of England Parish Church located just off the old Yarmouth Road. It is a large medieval grade I listed historic place of worship. With the exception of a small boiler room and small vestry off the chancel the footprint of the building has not changed from its consecration in 1427. There is no church hall and no other building close to the parish church that can be easily be accessed for Sunday School work.

The tradition of the church generally is central with robes worn for all services. The electoral roll is 106 and average weekly attendance is 70 including children.

## **[ii] Worship at St. Andrew & St Peter's.**

8.00 am Prayer Book Communion [average 12]  
(Common Worship 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday)

11.00 am Common Worship Holy Communion [58]  
(Morning Prayer 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday)

A children's group meets every Sunday in the tower vestry.

A crèche also meets once a month and when it does this group uses the tower vestry and the Sunday School use the small Rector's vestry off the chancel.

There is a midweek communion on Wednesday at 9.30 am. [14]

This meets at the Rectory in winter months and transfers to the chancel from June – September when heating is not required in the Church.

## **[iii] Congregation demographic**

Our congregation includes people of most ages, but with a preponderance of those who are over 60.

## **[iv] Current work involving Children and Young People**

A Sunday school meets each week with an average of 6 young people. When a crèche is held in addition to the Sunday School the numbers double.

Some of our aspirations are hampered by our lack of facilities.

Classes from Blofield CP School visit throughout the year. Their Christmas and Easter services are held in the church.

There has been a historic lack of involvement of the clergy in this parish with our schools and uniformed organisations (Cubs, Brownies etc) for over 20 years. The current Rector is a governor of both schools and the area Scout Chaplain and hopes to see these links growing.

## **[v] Church Opening**

From July 2009 the church has been open daily during daylight hours.

## **[vi] Other uses of the church**

Each year there is a busy events programme which includes concerts, May and Christmas Markets, craft fairs and history days. An insulation day was held in church by our local environmental group. Filming took place in February 2011 for an educational project 'The Lost School'. Many village children were involved.

## **[vii] Quinquennial Inspection Report.**

This was last carried out in August 2006. Some of the recommended work has been undertaken: eg louvre replacement in the belfry windows, lead work on the roof to prevent water ingress and stone repairs after heavy frosts. The PCC has a health and safety / buildings officer who keeps an eye on the fabric and reports to each PCC meeting.

## **[viii] Finance.**

With the appointment of a full time Rector to the benefice in 2007 (previously part time Priest-in-Charge) our share payment has increased significantly. Although we under paid last year we are confident we will be on target this year.

The re-ordering project will be funded by a mixture of congregational giving, gifts, grant applications, fund-raising activities and, we trust, legacies. A fund-raising group has already begun to meet. Anonymous gifts totalling £18,000 have been received so far.

## Part I: The need

The congregation realises that we have to re-engage with our community in new ways if we are to be true to our calling as disciples of Jesus.

The church has a number of needs:

### 1) Heating.

- a. The present heating system takes 4 hours to reach its maximum heat and struggles to raise the temperature 4°C above what it was before the heat was turned on.
- b. The average Sunday Service temperature (inc Christmas) in December was 8.3 °C
- c. The heating system was installed in 1912
- d. The oil boiler was installed in 1962
- e. Oil was stolen from our fuel tank in May 2010
- f. Midweek services and PCC meetings take place at the Rectory because it is both expensive and ineffective heating the church.

Creating a warm welcome to all is crucial to our ministry and mission. A more efficient system will allow the building to be used during the week.

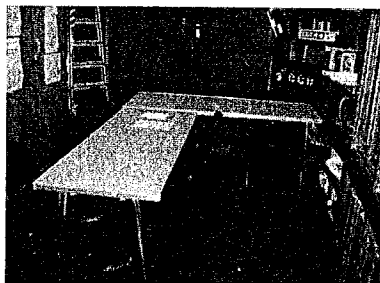
### 2) Storage.

Despite the size of the building there is nowhere to store the array of materials which are used throughout the year. This includes Christmas decorations and crib figures, display boards, 'flat-pack' tables, pedestals etc. Many of these items were left in the choir stalls in the chancel (it was never used). By removing clutter from the chancel we have succeeded in filling the Rector's vestry.



### 3) Children's work.

After many years without regular children's work we are delighted to see a regular group of children in church each week. It is a rare thing to be 'childless' on a Sunday morning. Their group meets during the service and they gather in the only usable room under the church tower. There have been times when this room has proved too small.



In December 2010 we began a trial with a crèche on the first Sunday of the month. This has seen numbers of children double. To do this we have to empty the clutter from the Rector's vestry (off the chancel) so the Sunday School can meet there. This is a small room and can only cope with 6 children and 2 adults. The crèche then uses the tower room as it gives easy access to the toilet and to their parents in church if necessary.

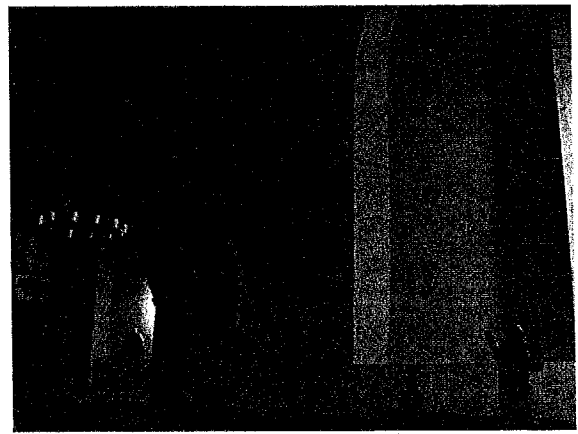
We would like to offer a regular crèche and to be able to divide the Sunday school group into two groups as there is quite an age variation between the oldest and youngest. For this to happen we need an extra room.

Some years ago holiday clubs were held in church. We would like to see these running again but recognise the limitations of the building. It is important for the ministry and mission of the church that what has begun at a holiday club is continued by keeping a group running regularly. For this to happen we need better facilities.

#### **4) Lighting.**

In 1964 the church installed fluorescent tube lights on the nave pillars. These lights have served many years and add nothing to the ambience of the building. Lighting should create 'warmth', set the scene and draw the eye to liturgical areas.

One of the lighting challenges is the chancel. In 1812 the four chancel windows were blocked up, although one on the north side reopened as a war memorial in the 1950's. The chancel is therefore fairly dark and needs good lighting. The chancel is used for midweek communion services in the summer months and, when new heating is installed, will be used by other groups too e.g. a bereavement group



#### **5) Music**

Blofield Church is blessed with one of the most capable bands of bell ringers in the Diocese outside Norwich. They ring on Thursday evenings and for Sunday services and special events. It is an important ministry and needs to be developed and maintained.

The ringers, however, ring from a balcony overlooking the church. The bells are quite quiet in the building precluding any form of musical rehearsal or warming up before a service by organist or the music group.

We have talented musicians within the congregation and in the community and would like to use more of their musical talents during our worship without disturbing the ringers.

Filling the tower arch with glass will create a sound barrier, keep heat in the church, and create an extra Sunday School room.

## 6) Kitchen

We have a well used kitchen which not only provides after service refreshments but caters for our Harvest Supper, Lent Lunch, serves cream teas for the annual open gardens event and interval refreshments during concerts.

The kitchen is situated in the western bay of the south aisle. It has some limitations:

- a) Noise – washing up during concerts, kettles boiling etc
- b) The kitchen is separated by a curtain and has no proper servery. It is the first thing a visitor sees when entering the church and is not pleasing to the eye.
- c) Health and Safety issues could arise as people need to pass through the kitchen to enter the south aisle (where the children's corner is).



## 7) Toilet

Blofield Church is equipped with a disabled toilet. Sometimes during concerts we have very long queues. When a large children's choir performed we had to use a neighbouring house's facilities to reduce the queuing. A second toilet would be an asset.

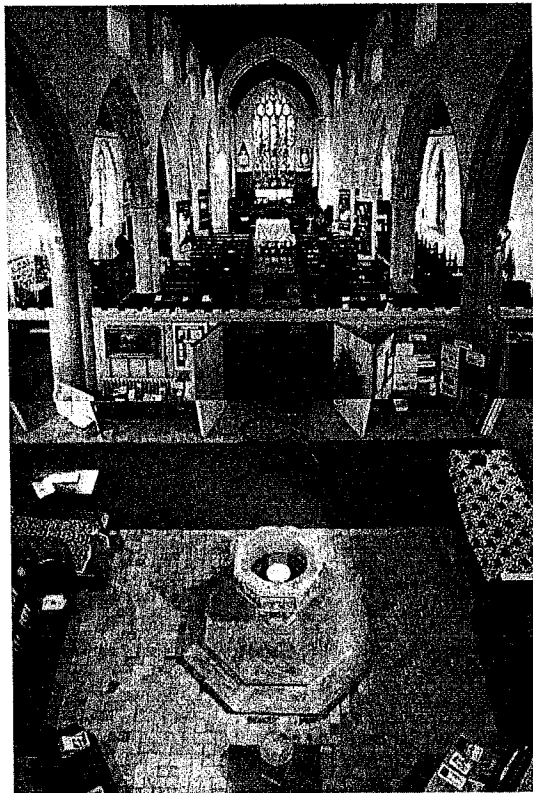


## **8) Community use**

Blofield Parish Church is rarely used during the week for any events, other than funerals. There is a steady flow of tourists who are delighted to find an open church. People often stop by to pray and light candles.

We would like to do more by using the space which exists in the western bay of the nave and side aisles. This part of the building is separated from the nave by a Georgian screen. At present it is occupied by the font but applications have been submitted to the DAC to have it re-sited to a bay in the north aisle.

This central area is to become a 'community space'. Not only will it be a useful area for church use, but we want it to be made available to groups and agencies within the community mid week. To create a proper room a gallery is to be formed above. This extra floor space will extend into both side aisles and will provide extra seating when needed as well as exhibition/local history displays.



## **9) Redecoration**

When all proposed building work which includes removing the heating pipes has been finished it would be good to give the Church a coat of paint. It was last redecorated about 20 years ago.

## **Part 2: Why we need it.**

### **We need to develop the building for the following specific reasons:**

#### **[i] Worship**

Blofield Church is underused primarily because of the lack of cost effective and efficient heating. We want to see the building being an effective 'partner' as the community gathers to worship. People need and expect a degree of warmth, especially the more vulnerable members. Some stay away because it is so cold.

Better lighting, especially for evening worship, will create a greater ambience with the building 'worshipping' itself.

We wish to enhance our music using the best of the old and the best of the new to make our liturgy worshipful, honouring and uplifting. This means having a building warm enough to practice during the week and without disturbing the ringers on a Sunday. When we worship it should be our best. Good worship draws people in.

#### **[ii] Nurture & Teaching**

The church family consists of people of all ages. This is the church of today. The church of tomorrow and tomorrow's leaders are born out of today's legacy. Fundamental to our mission and ministry is our work with young people. At present we work within the limitations of the space we have but this is too restrictive. There are c 350 children on the primary school rolls, although not all live in the parish, and 3 pre-school groups. Add to that the numbers attending secondary education and the total is over 500. Quite simply we barely scratch the surface with our work with young people. Community space and rooms for group work are vital to grow the work we have begun. Looking further into the future we would like to have a youth worker to help with this need.

#### **[iii] Pastoral Ministry**

In the course of the last three years there have been 71 funerals, 40 baptisms and 27 weddings. All of these are pastoral opportunities. There are times when it is appropriate to gather larger groups for baptism and marriage preparation but we are unable to deliver this either in the Rectory or the Church.

Of more concern is our lack of ongoing support for the bereaved. The PCC has spoken of this particular need and would like to see a bereavement group established in the Church.

We have people using our building who are battling with addiction issues. We would like to offer greater support to them and see this ministry being extended to others.

#### **[iv] Building and sustaining community.**

Our country has been historically blessed with a strong sense of community cohesion but this has changed dramatically in the closing decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Even villages where traditionally 'everyone knew everyone's business' have lost some of their togetherness. Our village forbears would be horrified that people today do not know the names of their neighbours.

Social fragmentation and family breakdown mean people lead increasingly isolated lives. We have also seen a growth in the population and with a further increase in building likely, the dynamics of the village may change. It is important that the Church responds to this and helps new people settle and belong.

In medieval times the Church was the only local building that was sufficiently large for the community to gather in. It was at the heart of its community –both for worship and for social and civil functions.

To build community we need to:

- 1 Use the building as an agent of sustaining and building the community.
- 2 To make it available to groups who can deliver some of the needs which are not met in the village already. Groups like Sure Start, CAB and Age UK have all shown an interest in the project.

### Part 3: Why we need this now.

- 1 After an initial growth in children's work we have reached a plateau. For the work to develop and to keep morale up it is important to seek ways of providing extra space for our children's work. We have a number of leaders who are actively involved in looking after our children's work and who could do more if we had space. We do not want people to drift off and find another church in the city or elsewhere because we were not able to nurture our own village children in the Christian faith.
- 2 Every year we endure cold winters and say we must do something about it. This is the time to address this basic need.
- 3 The Rectory is not a good place for midweek services and PCC meetings. The Rectory children are entering their teenage years and need their home to be their place.
- 4 Many groups have expressed great interest in using our church as a base for their own outreach, such as CAB and Age UK. As government cuts are made it the Churches will have to become more involved (as they were historically). We want to be equipped to fulfil this ministry.
- 5 We have made an application to move the font. For thirty years the parish has discussed this but it has come to nothing. With the permissions granted it could well move this year. With its move the back of the church the area behind the screen at the back of the church will be free and ready to be used and adapted.

### Part 4: Support and practicalities.

Over the Christmas period when our attendances increase a questionnaire was handed out. Copies still remain in the pews for people to fill in. The results from December 2010 – February 2011 are as follows:

	Support	No support	Not concerned	No answer
Improving the heating	86%	1%	6%	7%
Moving the font	73%	14%	10%	3%
Improving the lighting	80%	3%	11%	6%
Redecoration	86%	3%	11%	0%
To create a glass partition for the Tower arch	92%	3%	1%	4%
To create a welcome space for church and community events	89%	1%	7%	3%
To create a new gallery level for church and community events	83%	4%	10%	3%

As we asked for age profiles within the questionnaire we noticed the largest group for respondees were those aged between 30-40 years, followed by those over 60. This was not a finding we expected.



Provisional drawings for the project have been submitted to the DAC which is positive towards the project.

An open day is planned for Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April to which the village is invited to not only to view the plans but to learn about some of the ways we will be using the facilities after the project has been concluded.

### **Part 5: Environmental issues**

Our existing heating system runs on oil. In winter months the boiler runs from Saturday evening through until midday on Sunday and increases the temperature by about 4°C from what it was before it was turned on. This is hugely wasteful. The new heating system will be fuelled by gas, which not only burns more efficiently, is less likely to be stolen. We hope to use the church building significantly more than we do at present, but through careful management and by keeping the building at a set-back temperature when not in use we hope to keep costs and consumption down. We cannot expect to reduce our overall consumption and carbon footprint but at least we will be using a more efficient fuel.

Heating the 'welcome space' for small group work and midweek services will use less fuel than heating the whole building.

The PCC has researched geothermal and air source heat pumps which work most effectively with under floor heating. With large portions of the chancel and sections of the nave floor covered by ledger slabs this would not be particularly effective.

The PCC would like to do further research on the use of PV panels on our south facing aisle roof which is not visible from any roads and footpaths to the church.



## **Part 6 Other options**

One option is to do nothing and carry on as we have for decades. The same issues over heating, children's work and lack of connection with the village will remain. The Church will remain physically and spiritually at the edge of the community – there for emergencies and Christmas.

We could just address the heating problem and improve the space created by the re-location of the font. This would help for social events at the church and concerts. The congregation would be warm. It would not help with our children's work. Heating the whole building each time a community group wanted to use it would be an environmental waste.

We could build a church hall in the churchyard, and this has been discussed. There are two possible locations for a hall: to the north of the building where the ground is level but this would have a visual impact on the church from the road. The other location would be to the south, reached through the south door, but the churchyard drops away quite steeply and building would be more of a challenge. It would involve moving the kitchen away from the aisle into the hall. The cost of a new hall is greater than adapting the interior of the building.

We could do all of our children's work in one of the village halls. As these are quite a distance there would be very little contact between the congregation and the children – not an effective way of helping our children belong.

We could declare the church redundant and move everything into the village hall. There would be no support for this from the congregation or from the village.