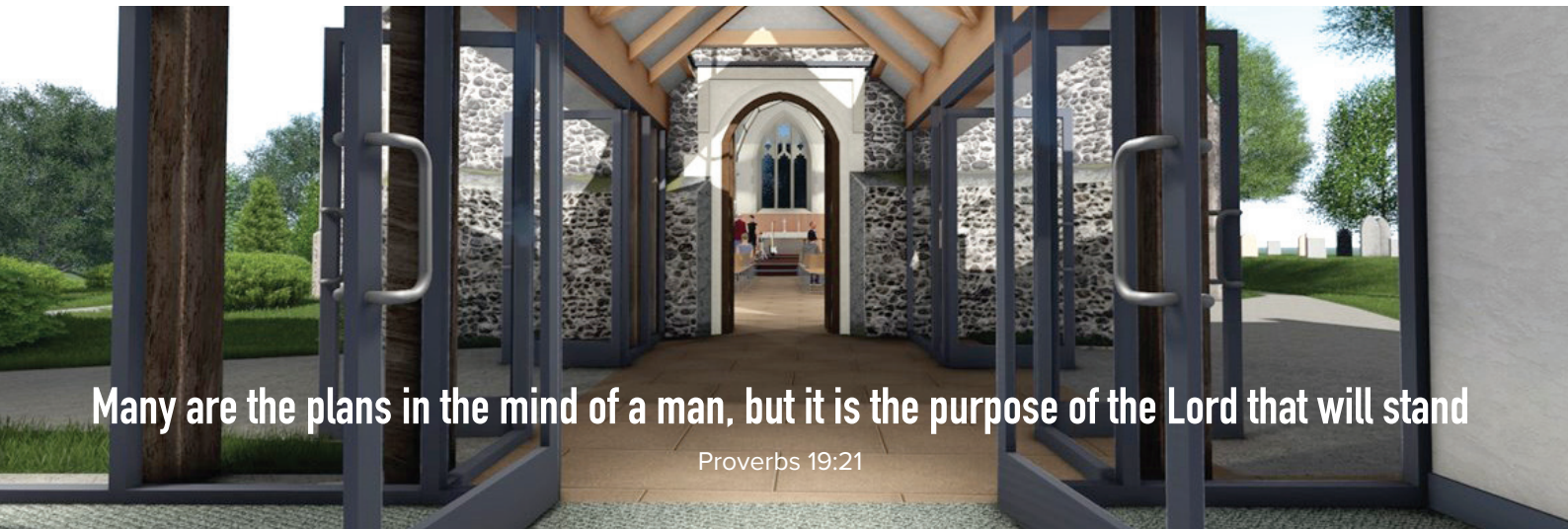


A CHURCH FOR OUR TIME

A Vision for St Leonard's Church



Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand

Proverbs 19:21



A CHURCH FOR OUR TIME

The village of Oakley was mentioned in the Domesday Book and since those early times, St Leonard's Church has been a focus for Christian worship and at the heart of important life events for those who live in the parish.

Our beautiful Church has stood as a beacon of hope and strength during two world wars and the agricultural, industrial and technological revolutions. Individuals and families in our community can trace their histories through the baptisms, weddings, funerals that have taken place and the Christian festivals of Easter and Christmas.






While the Church has a long history, it has not stood still – both in terms of the bricks and mortar as well as in the way that the congregation has responded to the needs of the community, changes in society and the opportunities to spread the Good News. The inside of St Leonard's Church and the way it is used is very different today compared to Medieval times.

The last time major improvements were carried out at the Church was 1870. Rev. John Monkhouse commissioned one of the leading architects of the day and together, they worked to modernise the Church by introducing seating, space for a choir and adding a tower with bells. 1870 was a time of great change in Victorian England and it was a time when design reflected Italian influence. St Leonard's in 1870 provided a very modern Church experience for the village of Oakley!





Despite the challenges we presently face, St Leonard's is used for a wide range of Church and community events. The building itself has not changed a great deal since 1870 when the last set of major improvements were carried out. While the Church was considered modern in 1870, it also now falls short of many of the facilities that we take for granted and expect in a 21st Century public building:

-  It is not versatile and there are huge space restrictions
-  There is no running water and we do not have toilet or baby-changing facilities
-  The heating is inadequate and inefficient
-  Seats are uncomfortable, in poor condition and inflexible
-  The Church is not accessible to all people.

As our population increases and demographic changes mean we are living longer, we believe it is unacceptable that the Church cannot welcome and accommodate large parts of our community in comfort.

A Church for our Time is the project that will make changes to St Leonard's Church, not just to address these fundamental problems but to provide more opportunities to welcome worshippers and take the message of God's love to the community and further afield. We do need plans that celebrate and care for the beauty and heritage of the building but we also need an environment that enables us to build God's Kingdom and fulfil His plans for His Church at the heart of 21st Century Oakley.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on our proposals and we very much welcome your support for the project as build a church for our time.

The Parochial Church Council for Oakley with Wootton



IMPROVING THE CHURCH

What is the plan?

We imagine St Leonard's Church with modern and efficient heating and lighting and flexible space that is used throughout the week for an even wider range of church and community uses.

We also aim to build a small extension that provides toilets, servery facilities and a meeting room that welcomes all our visitors and congregations.

Taken together, the improvements will modernise the way the Church facilities are used, provide a more accessible community space and address the serious failings in the building.

We do not consider this a "nice to have" project. While the facilities at St Leonard's Church may have been appropriate in 1870, we believe they are unacceptable for such an important building in today's society. In recent months, we have used the Church building for community concerts, festivals and meetings and while it provides space to do this, the seating is inflexible, sight lines are poor and people have to cross the road to use toilets and have refreshments.

Listening and Consulting

We know that our Church is for the whole of Oakley and not just the Christian community. Since 2014, we have taken time to consult and hear the views from across the village and we understand the strength of the comments we have received:

- ✓ There is an acceptance that change is required. People understand that we can't 'do nothing'
- ✓ There is an understanding that the Church building is not 'fit for purpose' and it does not provide facilities that would be expected in a public building in the 21st century
- ✓ There is a desire for improvement and the congregation believe that 'this is our time' to lead these changes
- ✓ We need more flexibility because we want to use the building differently on different days of the week for different types of services and events
- ✓ We need to ensure that the physical welcome of the building attracts Christians and visitors of all ages and faculties.

Who will it benefit?

The whole community of Oakley will benefit from having a beautiful Church building that provides a modern, accessible, well-equipped space for Church services, family celebrations, Christian festivals and community events.

How much will it cost?

At this early stage in the project, we have preliminary estimates from our architects and this suggests that the cost will be in the region of £850,000. Our first priority will be to make the improvements to the existing Church and this will cost approximately £350,000 with a similar amount being required to build the extension. We have budgeted for contingencies and as with all projects, estimates will change as we learn more about the fabric of the building and as the design is refined. The Project Team and Church Leadership will provide close oversight of the budget and the assumptions that are made and will look to make economies where possible and seek opportunities to apply for grants to supplement congregational and community giving.

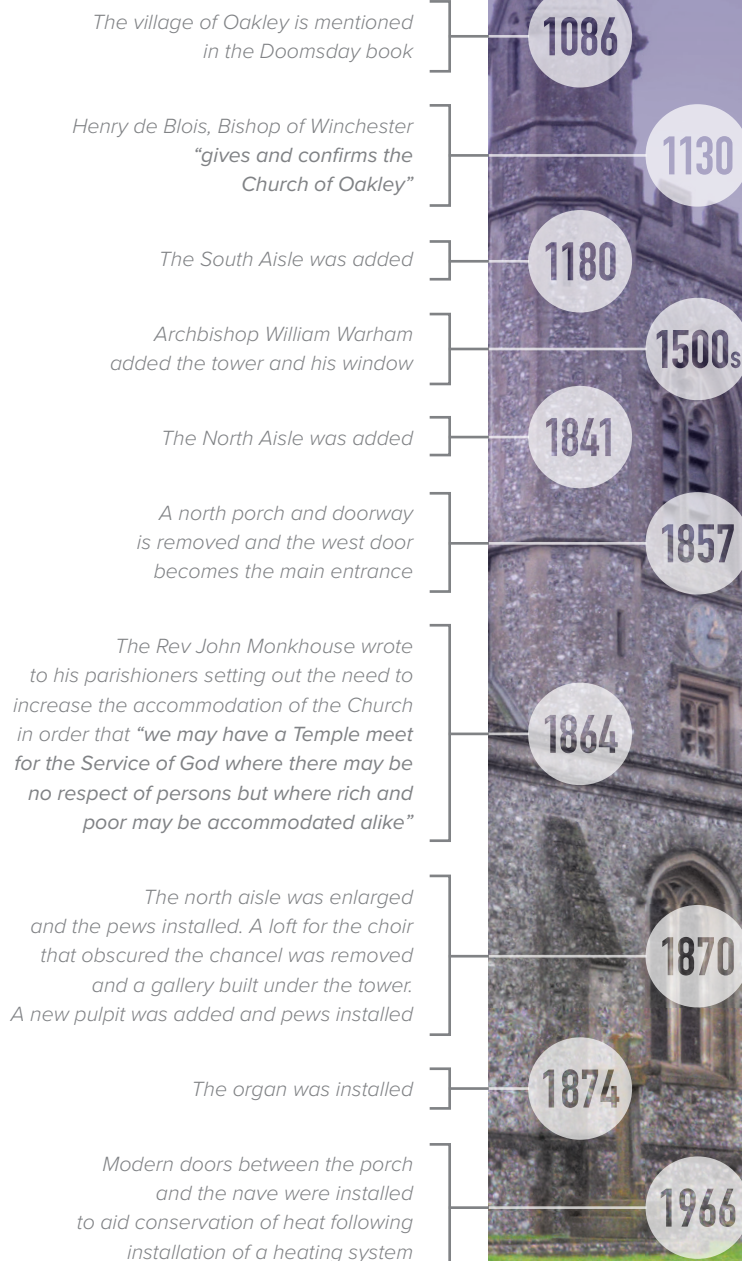
Caring for our Heritage

St Leonard's Church is a Grade 2* listed building with many important historical connections and artefacts. We want to showcase this heritage as part of the improvement programme as well as ensure that the Church becomes an accessible resource and focus for the community.

St Leonard's Church is associated with the Warham family who held the nearby Malshanger Estate in the 16th century. William Warham was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1504 and married and then crowned King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. The Church has a stained glass 'Warham window' and memorials to his family are in the south aisle. His coat of arms is over the west door entrance.

We know we are trusted to conserve our history and therefore we are working closely and consulting with important bodies such as Winchester Diocese, English Heritage, The Victorian Society and The Church Buildings Council who will help us improve the building and celebrate our legacy.

The Timeline of Changes in St Leonard's Church





HOW WILL IT HAPPEN?

By Faith

God rewards the faith of those who trust Him for the apparently impossible, as it has been seen throughout history

By Prayer

It is by prayer that God releases His power so that what in human terms seems impossible, in fact becomes reality. A dedicated team has been surrounding this project in prayer since 2014.

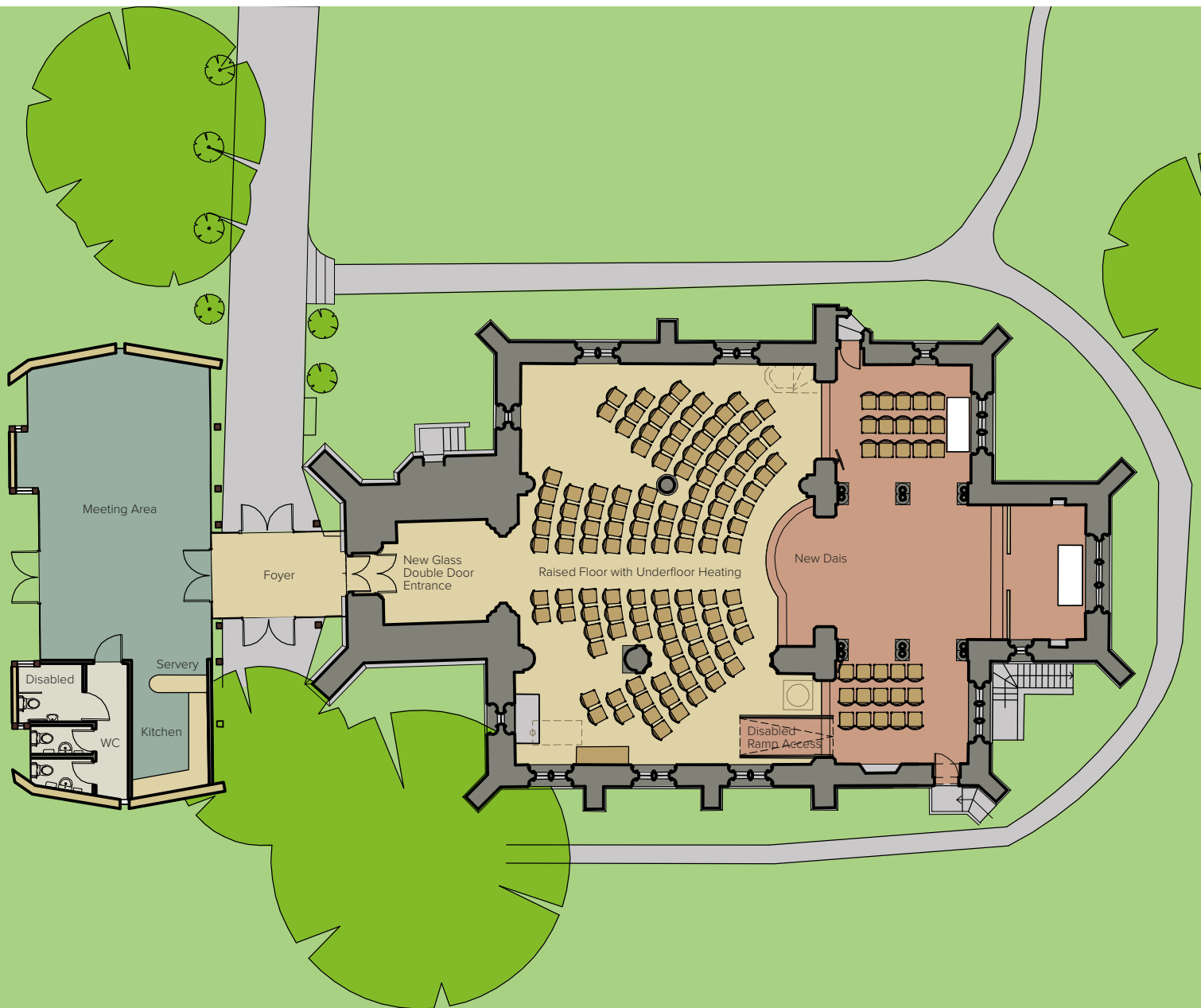
By Positive Commitment

The New Testament teaches us that Christ made a total commitment for us and we are called to do the same. Only by this positive approach and trust in Him are we able to receive all that He wishes to give us – far more than we could ever hope or imagine!



RESTORING HOPE, TRANSFORMING LIVES







See the virtual reality walkthrough of the plans at
www.OakleywithWootton.org.uk

FUNDING THE PROJECT

Past generations have had the courage and faith to develop and improve St Leonard's and ensure that it remains at the heart of the community and Church life. We have a responsibility for keeping the Church relevant as a 21st Century focus for Christian worship and for conserving, restoring and protecting the heritage of the building.

A Daunting Figure

We know that because there have been only minor improvements to St Leonard's Church building since 1870, the cost of the planned improvements is a daunting figure. We know that 'nothing is impossible with God' (Luke 1:37). Through His Spirit, God works through us and while sacrifice is not easy, it is a measure of our faith and commitment to God.

Affordable Giving

Some can afford to give more than others. What matters is the level of commitment to the project that is illustrated by our giving. C.S Lewis in Mere Christianity wrote "I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare"



"Oakley is a vibrant community. The church and St Leonard's Centre, that has already been redeveloped, has enabled innovative and new community based activity. The plans and proposals for St Leonard's Church are imaginative,

courageous and seek to enable the church building to serve both the church and the community in new ways. I have no hesitation in commending this project to you and look forward to joining you on the journey as it unfolds."

Bishop David

The Tax man can help!

If you are a taxpayer, please consider giving by Gift Aid. This enables us to recover tax amounting to 25% of what you give and to add that to your gift at no additional cost to you.

Opportunities to Give

We want to provide a wide range of opportunities to support the project through financial contributions:



One off donations and lump sum gifts.



Regular giving. We are creating shares in the project. Each share in the project will be a pledged commitment of £5 per week for 5 years.



Interest free loans. If you are able to offer a loan to help us cover the income/expenditure gap as the building proceeds, please consider this option.

“Many churches were upgraded or extended in the 19th Century to make them suitable for 19th century worship. They were beautifully done, and left us with a wonderful legacy. We believe the designs for improving St Leonard’s and the proposed extension will enable the church to be fit for purpose into the 21st century. The designs retain its beauty, but it they also provide an opportunity for far many more uses and ministries. It is not for us, it is so that the church can be used as a hub for sharing the gospel of Jesus in a much wider way, for bringing people together and for equipping us with spiritual strengths to survive and thrive in today’s world. It’s not about the buildings, but about using them for God to come through in our lives and our community. It’s about Him.”

Jeremy Bell, Church Architect

What Next

Please complete the attached Response Form, seal it in an envelope and either take or post it to the Appeal Treasurer at the address on the form.

You can also give through our website, see the progress of the project and find out more about the plans and how we are safeguarding our legacy.



For more information visit

www.oakleywithwootton.org.uk

Living and loving like Jesus, so that lives are transformed and hope restored

St Leonard's Centre Office, Rectory Road, Oakley, RG23 7ED