

The Mustard Seed Project



St John the Baptist Parish Church
Crowthorne

Project Description as approved by the
PCC on 14th July 2026

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Vision and Mission

Our Church Vision

Inspired by our faith in Jesus, we strive to be a joyful, nurturing, inclusive, and creative community where all can flourish in their relationships with God, themselves, others and creation.

The Project Mission

To live out our values of being a joyful, inclusive, nurturing and creative community by adapting our building to provide a warm, accessible and hospitable environment for our congregation, community and local users.

Project Overview

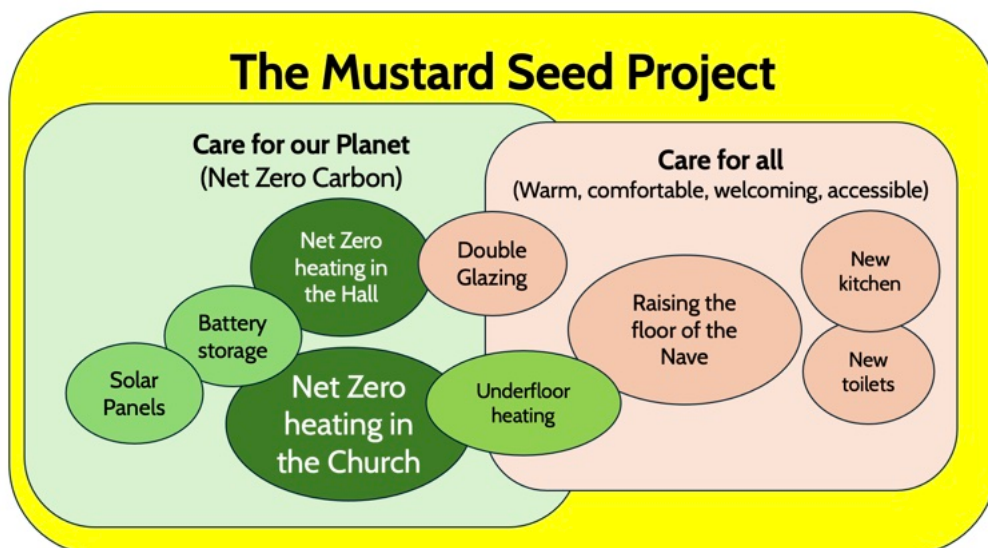
The Project Aim is:

"To provide a warm, accessible, and hospitable environment that brings families and the community together, while protecting our future through carbon-neutral, eco-friendly practices."

We are doing this:

"To foster a resilient, flourishing community where families thrive in a healthy, sustainable, and inclusive world."

The following diagram illustrates the various elements of the project



The following pages describe how we are:

- Transforming the Church heating to achieve zero carbon emissions
- Raising the Nave floor to achieve level access for all
- Installing a ramp from the Lady Chapel into the Nave
- Honouring the heritage of our Church by installing a new floor
- Removing some pews to create a flexible and usable space
- Replacing the Nave doors to reflect our welcome
- Replacing the folding screen in the Hall to provide soundproofing
- Renewing the kitchen to support our hospitality
- Redesigning our toilets to be an accessible and inclusive space
- Installing double glazing in the hall as part of our journey to Net Zero

Transforming the Church heating to achieve zero carbon emissions

The two Church gas boilers will be replaced with Air to Water heat pumps. These will provide a supply of hot water to a new underfloor heating system in the Nave. The heating will be on constantly in the Church during the cold weather, providing a much warmer, more comfortable experience.

Heating with underfloor heating requires less heat (40W). The radiant heat at floor level will be 25-27 °C. The heat at head and body level will be 18-20°C. This strategy focuses on providing a band of comfort in the occupied zone.

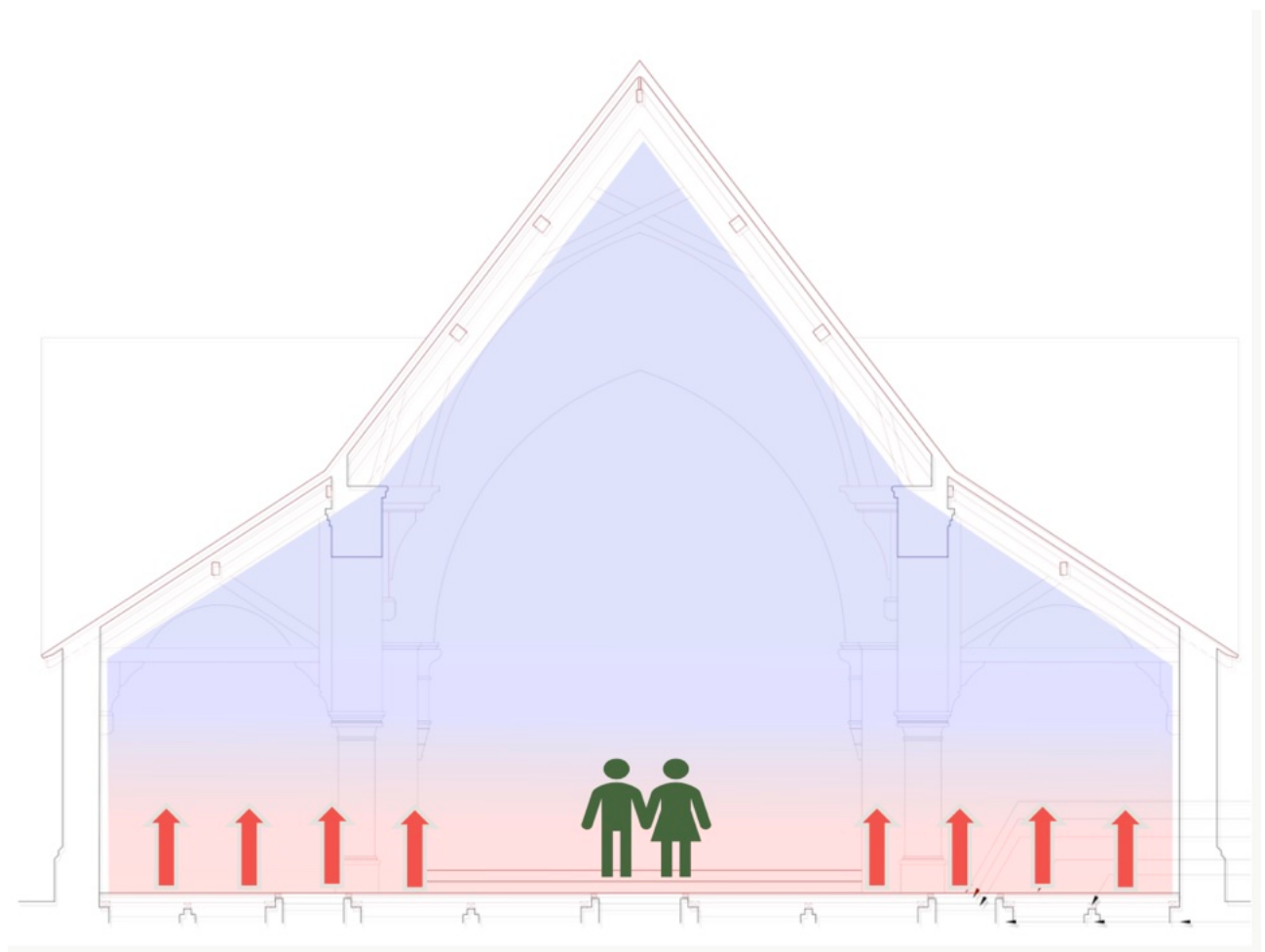
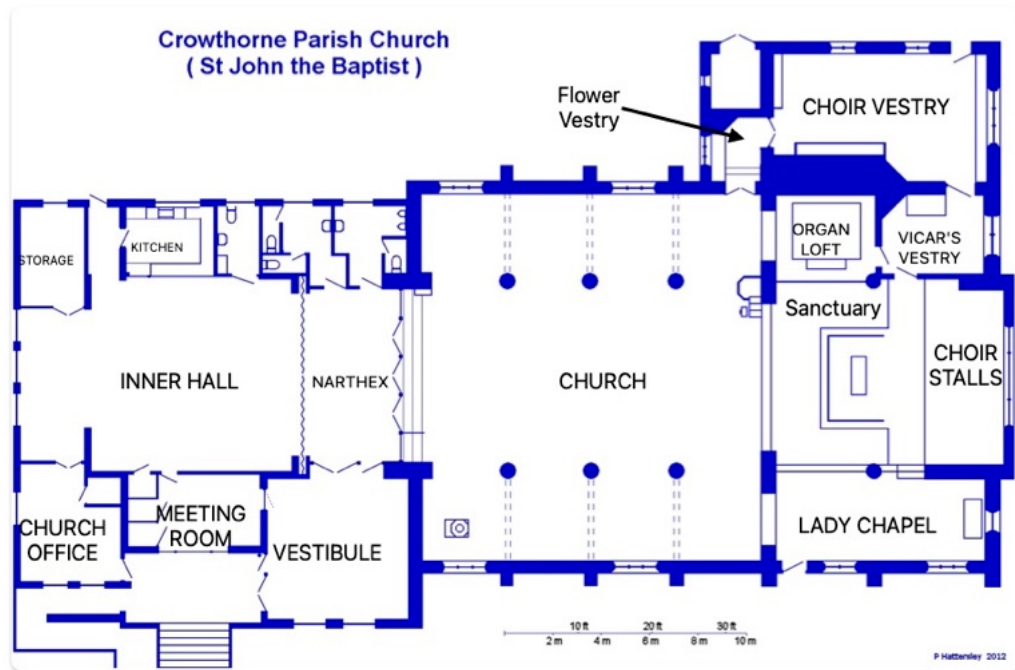


Figure 1: Indication of heat dispersion with underfloor heating



The Lady Chapel, Choir Vestry, Vicar's Vestry and Sanctuary will continue to be heated by radiators. The organ loft will have an electric heater to ensure that the organ is protected.

The Hall gas boiler will be replaced by an Air to Air heat pump.

This will provide warm air to seven modern large fan heaters situated in the Hall(3), the Church Office, the Narthex¹, the Vestibule and the Meeting Room. These will be much quieter than the existing heaters and provide air-conditioning in the summer as well as heating in the winter. Each zone will be separately controlled and we will be able to set the days, times and temperature of each room remotely. There will also be manual control of each area.

There will be an electric water heater in the kitchen to provide hot water to the kitchen and toilets. The (4) new toilets will have electric heaters.

We will install 28 solar panels on the roof of the Hall and a 40 KWh battery storage system to manage the electric power generated.

¹ The Narthex is the area between the Hall and the Nave of the Church.

Raising the Nave floor to achieve level access for all

The new raised floor in the Nave will provide level access between the Nave and Hall. People will no longer need assistance to enter and leave the Church, and access will be improved for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

There will also be level access between the Nave and the Sanctuary, making movement of the clergy, servers, LLMs and choir easier. This will also enable the congregation level access to the altar, should we decide to return to the practice of serving communion at the altar rail.

Having a completely level area at the front of the Church will provide greater flexibility with worship.

We will provide a lightweight set of staging to enable concert organisers to seat orchestra or choir on a raised platform.

Installing a ramp from the Lady Chapel into the Nave

The Lady Chapel will be retained as it is, with the beautiful Victorian floor and the original external wooden door.

The floor of the Nave will be raised by approximately 30cm. This will provide level access from the hall into the Church and from the Nave into the Sanctuary.

A ramp will be installed in the Nave which will enable people to pass easily between the Lady Chapel and the Nave. There will also be some steps for the more nimble footed.

This means that wheelchair access into the Lady Chapel through the outside door will be maintained.

Honouring the heritage of our Church by installing a new floor

Our Nave floor is in a dreadful state of repair. Well-meaning people have, over the years, laid down carpet on the Victorian tiles and this has caused a great deal of damage. Part of the floor has been concreted over and new tiles have been laid where the old tiles have deteriorated.

For at least 15 years, we have been urged to repair the floor and various initiatives have tried to tackle the problem. Some years ago we did get as far as getting a quote – this was £49,000 in 2019.

We could not contemplate a project of this magnitude without addressing the floor.

We have looked at repairing the floor, but have concluded that the best solution for the Church is to raise the floor, install an underfloor heating system, and then lay down a beautiful new ceramic floor across the whole of the Nave.

We believe that this will honour the heritage of our Victorian Church and create something of beauty for generations to come.

Removing some pews to create a flexible and usable space

Our Mission is “to provide a warm, accessible, and hospitable environment that brings families and the community together”.

The new underfloor heating, with a level floor is the first step. We want to provide a much more inviting area where people can gather, talk, study the Bible, or pray together. We plan to increase the use of the Church by having meeting areas, and better children’s space. We hope that this will encourage more families to come to help build new communities.

If we are going to do more in the Church, we need more space, and removing the pews in the side aisles will provide that. There will be comfortable chairs for people that would still like to sit in these areas for worship.

We will purchase new stacking chairs which can be deployed when we host very large services. These will be stored in the furniture cupboard which will be cleared of most of the existing contents.

Replacing the Nave doors to reflect our welcome

The wooden and glass doors dividing the Narthex and the Nave are very dated. They create a barrier between these two spaces.

We want to create a more welcoming entrance and to do this will install a folding glass screen.

This will increase ease of access for people with mobility issues, for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

When we have large services people have been reluctant to overflow into the Hall. When we host such services in future we envisage more seating in the Narthex, enabling people seated there to fully participate in worship.

Replacing the folding screen in the Hall to provide soundproofing

The current folding screen between the Narthex and the Hall is closed on a Sunday when young people's activities take place in the Hall during the service. It is opened after the service to create a larger space for gathering and refreshments.

The screen is flimsy and difficult to operate. It provides poor sound insulation. The noise from joyous activities in the Hall is sometimes heard by those in the service.

Replacing the screen with an acoustic folding screen will improve the sound insulation. It will also provide a better delineated space when we have activities in the Hall during the week.

Improved sound insulation will also help when new activities in the Church might otherwise disturb quieter activities taking place in the Hall (i.e. Bridge Club)

Renewing the kitchen to support our hospitality

Our kitchen was installed in the 1980's and is now no longer fit for purpose, especially as we wish to increase our hospitality offer to our community. Our Social Committee already does an amazing job providing wonderful food at Church events, such as Harvest Supper and Pancake evenings.

We want to offer more in the way of hospitality to the community and that means better facilities.

We propose to install a completely new kitchen, designed to meet modern standards.

Redesigning our toilets to be an accessible and inclusive space

Like our kitchen, the toilets were installed in the 1980's and are now in a sorry state. Men's urinals are a thing of the past.

Our disabled toilet opens directly onto the Hall. This is not ideal for disabled users. It is also more difficult to access when the Hall is in use.

We therefore intend to replace the men's, ladies and disabled toilets with four modern toilets accessed from the Narthex. These will include one disabled toilet and two parent and child changing facilities.

The disabled toilet will have a sliding door – the plan below has not yet been updated to show this change.

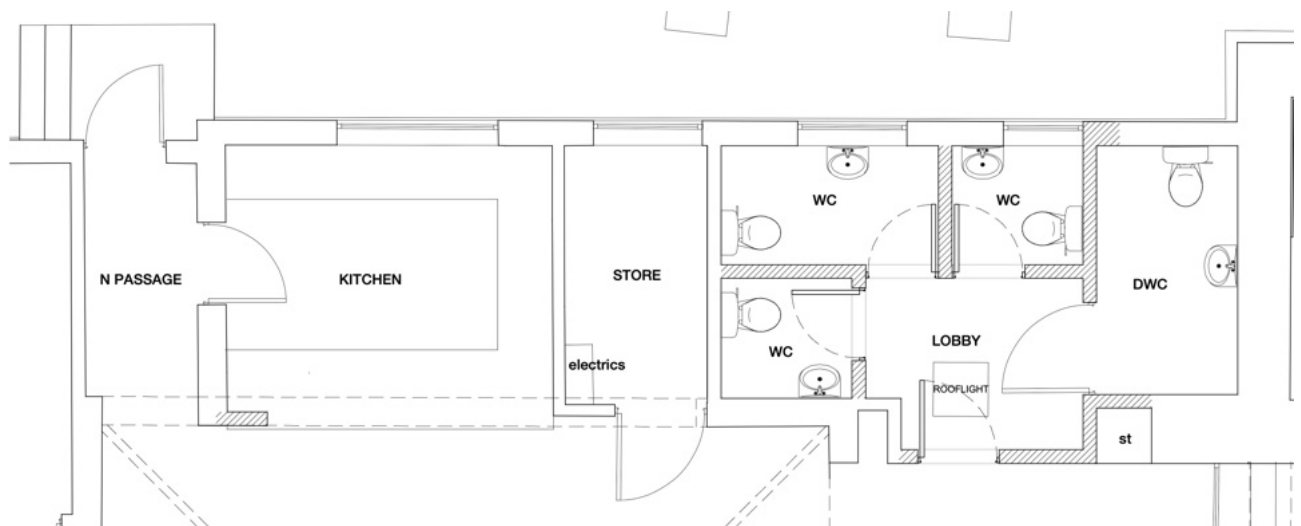


Figure 2: Design of the new kitchen and toilets

Installing double glazing in the hall as part of our journey to Net Zero

The Hall windows were installed in the 1980's and are now in a poor state of repair. We intend to replace these with double glazed windows offering improved comfort and a saving on energy consumption.

Costs

Estimated costs

The costs of this work are estimated as follows:

Summary of costs (£)

Item	Estimated cost
Church heating, including the new floor	642 k
Hall heating,	40 k
Solar panels and batteries	25 k
New kitchen and toilets	270 k
Glass sliding door	30 k
Folding screen	20 k
Double glazing	30 k
Furniture	25 k
	1,082 k

Breakdown of Construction Costs for the Church (£)

Building works	148,075
Services installations and associated builder's work	97,993
External works	6,800
Sundry construction allowances	21,040
Heating to Hall areas	60,000
On site preliminaries, overheads and contingencies	118,446
Budget Construction	452,294
Inflation allowance	18,092
Budget Construction Cost	470,000
Other Project Costs	
Professional fees and expenses	70,500
Other fees, surveys and planning costs	15,000
Loose furniture and equipment	85,500
Estimated Project Costs (excluding VAT)	555,500
VAT on above costs 20%	111,100
Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme	(25,000)
Estimated Project Costs	642,000

Breakdown of costs for the Kitchen and Toilets

Preparatory works	5,680
Demolitions and alterations	26,305
Finishes	19,100
Fittings	38,850
Decorations	4,300
Services	30,855
External works	2,000
Asbestos removals	3,000
Sub-total building works	130,090
Sundry items, price and design risk allowance (5%)	6,505
Contractor's On-site preliminaries	25,000
Contractor's overhead and profit	16,159
On-site contingency allowance	8,888
Construction budget total (ex VAT)	187,000
Inflation allowance	7,293
Professional fees	29,144
Other fees, surveys and planning costs	2,000
Estimated project costs (ex vat)	225,437
VAT	45,087
Estimated project costs	270,524

Next steps

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St John the Baptist Parish Church, Crowthorne, met on 14th July 2026 and decided unanimously to go ahead with the project.

The PCC, as Trustees of the Crowthorne Parish Church Trust, also decided to submit a request to the Charity Commissioners to withdraw the proceeds of the CPT for use in the project. This is expected to be around £180,000.

We have already prepared a Statement of Need and a Statement of Significance as required by the Oxford Diocese for our application for a Faculty.

The detailed plans are in the process of being drawn up by our architect.

Once we have a Faculty and Planning Permission we will start fundraising for the project and hope to start work in 2028.

We have appointed a project team to implement the project. The members are:

Ken Perrett (Project Manager)
Revd Laura Wheatley Downs (Vicar)
Anne Pelham (Churchwarden)
Anne Mohan (Fabric Committee)
Anna Pearce (Green Team)
Julia Norton (Fundraising)
Leigh Welham (Social Committee)
Pam Carter (PCC Secretary)
Tracy Perrett (Treasurer)

Contact Details

Please contact the Mustard Seed Project Manager, Ken Perrett, for more information. Email: Ken.Perrett@stjohnscrowthorne.co.uk

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