



Virtuous Circles II – Turnastone Project Update – Summer 2020

The project being developed to insert overnight visitor accommodation at St Mary Magdalene Turnastone reached an important milestone recently.

Vowchurch and Turnastone PCC met to receive a presentation from the architects, Connolly Wellingham and unanimously resolved that the project should proceed to detailed designs and to securing the necessary permissions and funding to implement, hopefully in 2021.

The innovative project builds on the successful Champing model, offered nationally by the Churches Conservation Trust. It aims to attract a wider audience to understand and enjoy the fascinating heritage offered in our churches, whilst creating a valuable income stream for building management and maintenance, leading to long term sustainability.

Virtuous Circles II is aiming to deliver a high quality design that will be both appropriate and sympathetic to the space at Turnastone, and that can also be a pilot for other churches that may be interested in learning from, or replicating the design elsewhere.

The PCC had been due to meet in March but lockdown put pay to that. However, the steering group has continued to meet digitally over the past 4 months and good progress has been made.

Revd Simon Lockett wanted to be sure all members of the PCC were able to receive the presentation and be given the opportunity to ask questions of the design team and the steering group. With lockdown easing we were finally able to arrange a Covid safe, socially distanced meeting at Vowchurch village hall on July 22nd.

The approved designs mean a freestanding, reversible, low energy and low impact timber structure will sit at the back of St Mary's nave, a Grade II* Listed building, creating rentable accommodation facilities for visitors looking for a unique experience, spiritual retreat or pilgrimage.

The congregation will also benefit from improved facilities and the revenue stream generated from visitors will provide a vital source of funding for the parish's future maintenance responsibilities, both at St Mary's and St Bartholomew's Vowchurch.

The project is a partnership with the Herefordshire Churches Tourism Group and the Churches Conservation Trust, and the development work for this national pilot is being provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

If you would like to find out more, get involved or have any questions please contact Revd Simon or our Project Manager Sam Hine turnastone@visitherefordshirechurches.co.uk 07974 772840.