

St. Mary's Church, Partington & Carrington (1013)

Statement of Need

Section 1: Nature of Parish and Worshipping Community and the Use of the Church Buildings and Grounds

Overview of the Parish

Today Partington & Carrington is primarily an urban estate parish with a population of circa. 8500. The population centres comprise: a predominantly social housing estate which has been expanded in phases since the 1950s from what was a small rural village with St. Mary's Church at the centre; and an older village centre of Carrington, now dominated by industrial complexes and former industrial land (see the "Statement of Significance" for more historical detail). Over 50% of homes in the parish are social or private rented. The parish is somewhat isolated geographically from neighbouring conurbations and Manchester City itself by farmland and a single main road link. Over one third of households have no access to a car for transport. The parish demographic is generally younger than the wider Deanery and Diocese. Approximately 60% of the residents are aged under 44 and 80% under 60 (in the 2011 census). Just under half the households with dependent children are lone parent households.

Whilst historically Partington has been a place of significant social disadvantage, the community spirit and identity are remarkably strong, with well-established networks of support both formal and informal. A key element of the regeneration of Partington was the redevelopment of the former, tired, 1960's shopping area in 2014, creating a bustling centre in which all shop units are filled and well used. There is a direct view of the church grounds from the village centre.

Further planned building works on former industrial brown-field sites and agricultural land surrounding Partington and Carrington are now at the advance planning stage, and may see a near doubling of the parish population within the next decade.

The worshipping community of the church has grown to around 100 people, including 15 youngsters, with a regular Sunday attendance averaging 58 (pre-Covid19).

A Centre of Community Life

St. Mary's Church is a prominent landmark at the centre of village life in Partington. The church itself hosts social activities in its buildings and grounds, alongside community bookings and one-off events. The buildings include: the main church space with flexible seating; "St. George's Room" which is an adjacent small parish hall; a well-equipped kitchen; and upper room office space (see the "Statement of Significance" for more detail).

Activities include:

- **Gardening and Grounds Maintenance Team** - The diverse team of volunteers work 2 mornings a week to maintain and develop the churchyard and grounds and share fellowship over tea and toast in the St. George's Room.
- **Playaway Toddler Group** - Our weekly play and support group for under-fives and their parents and guardians.
- **Coffee Mornings** - Popular monthly public openings for coffee, cake and conversation.
- **Youth Groups** – Sunday morning and Sunday evening groups for children and young people growing in their faith and discipleship.
- **Prayer Meetings** – Monthly gatherings for prayer for the parish, the nation and the world.
- **School Visits** – Monthly visits by groups of secondary school pupils to learn of the community engagement, life and worship of the church.
- **Slimmer's World** - Weekly support meetings for club members from across the parish.
- **Positive Partington** - Monthly meetings of this Partington Residents' Association.
- **Social Events** – Including music concerts, parish breakfasts, lunches and suppers, dances, quizzes, games, bar-be-ques, craft evenings and lectures.
- **Fairs** – An annual craft and gift fair at Christmas.
- **Discipleship Courses** – Include a Lent Course, mid-week groups and “Identity Course” an introduction to the Christian faith.
- **Training Events** – Hosting training events for the parish, diocese and local community, including for safeguarding, health and well-being, church leadership, mission and ministry.
- **Meetings** – Hosting meetings for local community organisations, councils and businesses.
- **National Citizen Service** – Annually, hosting a 2 week residence of a dozen teenagers and their leaders as part of the National Citizen Service, running social enhancement projects in our parish.
- **Celebrations** – Bookings for birthday parties, wedding anniversaries and other life events.

A Centre for Worship

St. Mary's Church building is in regular use for a variety of worship and other services including:

- **Sunday Services** – At 10.30am (both 10am and 11am under Covid19-restrictions), including Holy Communion, Morning Praise and All Age Services.
- **Mid-Week Private Prayer** – Opening of the building for the community with frequent visitors from 2.00pm – 3.00pm on a Wednesday.
- **Baptisms** – 10 to 15 baptisms annually of children and adults annually within one of the main Sunday services. Infant baptisms are preceded by a Thanksgiving Service attended by close family members a few weeks or months before.
- **Funerals** – Approximately 5 funeral services held in church annually attended by 40 – 100 people depending on the family circumstances of the deceased. The church has also hosted wakes and gatherings after such services.
- **Burials of Ashes** – 10 to 18 services annually held in the church grounds in either family grave plots or our dedicated Garden of Remembrance.

- **Weddings** – 1 or 2 a year with 60 – 100 people in attendance.
- **Easter** – Varied services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, alongside reflective gatherings in Holy Week.
- **Remembrance** – A very well attended Annual Memorial Service for those who have lost loved ones in recent years, and a Remembrance Sunday Service.
- **Christmas** – Additional services throughout December including a special “Advent Unspoken Communion Service”, traditional carol services, 3 secondary school services for different year groups, a very popular Christingle Service and Christmas Day Family Communion Service.
- **Ecumenical** – The church has hosted some ecumenical services organised with local churches of other denominations.
- **Prayer Services** – Hosting occasional creative prayer services and Quiet Days with prayer stations.
- **Civic Events** – The church has been a centre for prayer in response to national events and crises.

Section 2: Explanation of Needs

Yew Trees

Visibility and Aesthetic Value

As detailed in the “Statement of Significance”, St. Mary’s Church is of innovative and advanced design for its time and Grade 2 listed. The building was designed by Scottish architect George Truefitt known as a distinctly eccentric and non-conformist designer of Victorian churches. The building is both an asset and landmark for the village of Partington and the high volume of passing traffic on the adjacent main road. Writing in the RIBA journal in 2017, Tszwai So said “*Truefitt’s buildings and approach are perhaps even more pertinent today, and have a lasting resonance for which he should be better remembered.*” 60 - 80 years ago a line of 6 yew trees were planted at the boundary wall with the aim of complimenting, accentuating and beautifying the view of the church building from the adjacent centre of Partington. However, over the last 50 years these yew trees have grown in both height and width as to significantly obscure the view of this distinctive church from the approach of the road and the village. Trees that were once planted to enhance the appearance of the church are now having the opposite effect with year-round greenery.

As new residential buildings are constructed on two sides of the church building, so the view of St. Mary’s from the village will be reduced further. The PCC believes that enhancing the visibility of the church by reducing coverage from the yew trees will allow greater recognition and connection to our parish centre, enhancing our missional work in the future.

The PCC wishes to see this thick line of yew trees reduced in size and number so as to once again allow this historic building to be fully visible and appreciated by the village. This increased visibility will in turn enhance our identity and potential for mission and outreach in our local community.



Line of Yew Trees in front of St. Mary's Church Numbered 1 to 6.



Line of Yew Trees viewed from the churchyard, looking towards the village centre.

Health and History of the Trees

The PCC is particularly concerned with the conservation, beauty and sustainability of the church grounds and its planting for this and future generations, yet recognise that where trees are concerned it is important that the right species are in the right spot and serving an appropriate purpose, both for the health of the tree and the beauty of the location. The PCC consulted a qualified arboriculturalist from Frankland Tree Service in assessing the yew trees.

What may have been appropriate for their size and position on planting may not be so now many years later, and doing nothing means that our assets turn into our liabilities and significant costs in maintenance and repair for a future generation. An historic photograph in a collection belonging to Trafford Council shows a view of the church from the village centre in the 1970-80s where the building itself is far more visible. The yew trees are just visible, but are a much more appropriate smaller size.



Historic photograph of St. Mary's Church circa. 1970-80.

The yew trees were not present in an older picture taken in circa. 1906 in which the church is framed by poplar trees which are no longer present.



Historic photograph of St. Mary's Church circa. 1906.

The PCC wish to return the yew trees to their intended original purpose to frame and enhance the aesthetic aspects of the church building, by reducing their number and size.

Accessibility and Security

The yew trees release large quantities of sap and berries which renders the main entrance and access paths into the church grounds slippery underfoot, despite frequent sweeping and occasional jet washing. This can present a slip hazard and at least one recent fall of an elderly parishioner has been noted on the path directly beneath the yew trees.

The thickness of the yew trees' foliage obscures and limits the light from the streetlamp situated directly outside the entrance to the church grounds, thus making the entrance to the church grounds and building much darker by night.

There is a local authority CCTV monitoring camera (Number 185) maintained by Trafford Council, situated at the Millennium Clock on Manchester Road/Moss Lane directly opposite the church entrance. The presence of the yew trees block the camera's sight of the church building, windows and entrances at ground level.

The significant debris from falling needles, especially after heavy autumn rain, collects in the local wastewater street drains which are relatively small and frequently block as a result. Whilst waiting for Trafford Council street maintenance teams to attend, rain water frequently backs up to create a large and deep puddle across the entrance and gate to the church grounds limiting access, and in the winter, this can freeze to sheet ice.

The proposed tree works would increase light to the entrance from the overhead street lamp, and give a clearer ground level view of the church building and churchyard to the local authority CCTV camera, enhancing our security. The PCC proposes that reducing the number and size of the yew trees would also significantly reduce the burden of debris from needles and berries and enable the better clearance of rainwater, reducing the annual hazards of blocked drains, floods and slippery paths to a manageable level.

Limiting Future Structure Damage

On the southside the churchyard is contained by an historic sandstone boundary wall, of the same materials as the church building. The Quinquennial Inspection of 2015 noted some movement in the wall and opening of mortar joints in the immediate proximity of the yew trees, potentially due to the roots of the adjacent trees. The density of the yew tree planting and limited soil raised alongside the wall would concur with the Architect's observation. The PCC believes that if the trees are allowed to continue to grow unchecked, this may lead to heave, movement and further damage to the boundary wall.

The PCC does not want to leave the trees to grow unchecked and in such a density of planting, such that damage will occur to the sandstone retaining wall in the years to come, leaving a legacy of expensive building repairs for a future generation.

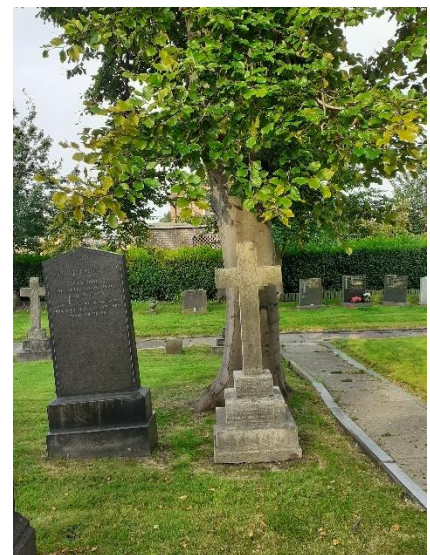
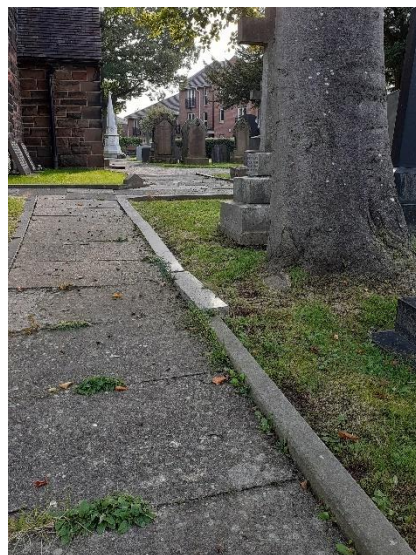
Beech Tree

A large beech tree is growing within the churchyard at the west end of the church building. The beech tree is an inappropriate species for its location in close proximity to the church and with time may have a negative impact on the church building itself. Several branches have been lopped in the past as they have encroached on the church building and roof.



Beech tree within the churchyard (shown in summer) – east facing and west facing views.

Currently tree roots are lifting and moving gravestone memorials and the ground of the historic graves in this section of the churchyard, as well as flagstones of the adjacent path (see below).



A replacement specimen oak tree, a more appropriate species, was planted on the adjacent edge of the churchyard several years ago, with the removal of the beech tree in mind, and is establishing well.



An establishing oak tree, planted in an appropriate spot on the boundary opposite the beech tree as a replacement specimen (shown in winter).

The PCC proposes felling the beech tree before it can do more damage to graves and paths and potentially the church building itself, whilst encouraging the growth of its replacement, an oak tree in a more appropriate spot.

Section 3: The Proposals

Yew Trees

The PCC proposes felling every other Yew Tree (numbers 2, 4 and 6) counting left to right as the church is viewed from the road (see Section 2 for photographic reference).

The trees are planted close together and some have split into multiple trunks (notably number 6). The trees proposed to be felled are generally the weaker specimens leaving the stronger or single trunked trees. The remaining trees would be trimmed to reduce the size of the crowns. The remaining trees would thus frame the church entrance and improve light to this pedestrian entry. The remaining trees would also frame the view of the church building itself, thus providing a more aesthetic and accessible view of the church's historic architecture. In addition, the reduction in the tree number and density will significantly reduce the debris of sap and berries which present a slip hazard to the pathways and debris of needles which causes water drainage issues. The reduction in the number of trees will also reduce the immediate risk of further movement or damage to the historic sandstone boundary wall.



Artist's impression of the current yew tree coverage of St. Mary's church building, viewed from the village.



Artists impression of the view of St. Mary's church building following the removal of 3 of the 6 yew trees and reducing the crown size of the remaining trees.

Beech Tree

The PCC proposes felling the beech tree before it can do more damage to graves and potentially the church building itself, whilst encouraging the growth of its replacements, including a specimen oak tree in a more appropriate spot.

Section 4: Evidence in Support of the Proposals

Ancient Yews

The yew trees are suspected to be *circa*. 60 - 80 years old given their size and the photographic evidence given in Section 2. Thus they are not classified as 'Ancient' or 'Veteran' species. St. Mary's churchyard is not listed by the Ancient Yew Group as having any significant yew trees.

<https://www.ancient-yew.org/ss.php/chester-diocese/12/49/60>
(Last accessed January 2021)

Tree Preservation Orders

None of the trees on the curtilage of St. Mary's Church are covered by a Tree Preservation Order as confirmed by Trafford Council in an email sent in September 2020, appended below.

On Fri, 4 Sept 2020 at 13:05, Development Management (Planning)
<development.management@trafford.gov.uk> wrote:

Thank you for your message.

I can confirm that trees standing within the curtilage of ***St Marys Church & Vicarage Manchester Road Partington M31 4FB*** are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order, nor do they enjoy any other form of statutory protection.

Kind Regards

Rebecca Napper

Business Support
Planning and Development,
Place Directorate
Trafford Council
Trafford Town Hall
Talbot Road | Stretford | Manchester | M32 0TH
Telephone: - 0161 912 1483

Parochial Church Council (PCC) Meetings

The PCC met on Monday 16th April 2018 and invited Chris Frankland, Arboriculturalist of Frankland Tree Services Ltd., to discuss the issues surrounding the trees of St. Mary's Church. This discussion has shaped the responses in this "Statement of Needs". The PCC resolved as follows:

Item 117 (2018)

"The PCC proposed that we could fell 3 of the 6 yew trees, leaving one either side of the gate, framing the entrance and allowing the light from the streetlamp to illuminate the gate and pathway. Then to leave another well shaped yew tree alongside the church. This would enhance the views of the church from the approach roads and give space for the remaining trees to grow and mature. The remaining trees may require some pruning to keep them in shape. Also the PCC proposed that the beech tree be felled and noted we have already planted a new oak tree in a more suitable adjacent location, to be one of the next generation of trees in the churchyard. It was proposed that we should approach Chris to gain a quotation for this work, and for supporting information justifying the felling of trees which will be required for a Faculty Application.

The PCC voted in favour of this proposal to proceed with a quotation with one abstention."

The PCC met on Thursday 21st January 2021 to consider the Faculty Application and costs of the work and resolved as follows:

"The PCC approves the plans for tree removal and maintenance as presented in the Statement of Needs and wishes to submit the necessary application form to the DAC"
The PCC voted in favour of this proposal with one abstention.

Congregation Consultation

In May 2019 the plans for the proposed tree works were shared with the congregation in a Sunday morning service and information circulated. Over the following weeks comments were solicited via the form shown in Appendix 1. Replies could be sent anonymously if wished, so that members of the congregation felt free to express their views honestly. The 11 written submissions are given in Appendix 2. All were positive as regards proceeding with the tree works as proposed.

Cost of the Proposed Works

An estimate for the proposed works was sought from Frankland Tree services who have a long history of arboricultural works for the Diocese of Chester, and more specifically at St. Mary's churchyard itself. This gives an indicative cost of £1380 for the removal of the 3 selected yew trees and beech tree, and pollarding of the remaining yew trees, as recommended in this Statement of Needs. The estimate is given in Appendix 3.

Congregation Consultation – Proposed Tree Works at St. Mary’s Church



Proposal to remove some of the Yew Trees and trim the remaining ones.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), comprising members of St. Mary’s Church, have consulted a Diocesan Arboriculturalist concerning the Yew Trees at the front of the church. The line of yew trees was planted at the front of St. Mary’s Church 50+ years ago in order to beautify the front aspect of the church. Over time the trees have grown to a large size which now significantly obscures the view of our historic building from the approach to the church most visitors see and use, as well as the view from the village centre. What was once planted to enhance the appearance of the church now is having the opposite effect.

Apart from the aesthetic issues, the yew trees themselves cause further issues:

- Blocking the light of the street lamp which provides illumination to the main entrance to church.
- Shedding of significant quantities of berries and sap which render the church paths slippery and hazardous, requiring jet washing and cleaning.
- Shedding of significant quantities of needles which block the adjacent drains for rainwater leading to localised flooding and icing in cold weather.

Whilst there is no immediate evidence that the yew trees are causing any damage to the sandstone boundary wall, we believe this could be the case in several years time. With further growth damage may occur leaving a legacy of expensive building repairs for a future generation.

The PCC proposes felling every other Yew Tree (numbers 2, 4 and 6) as you look from the road counting left to right as viewed from the road.

The trees are planted close together and some have split into multiple trunks. The trees to be felled are the weaker specimens leaving the stronger single trunked trees. The remaining trees would be trimmed to reduce the size of the crowns. The remaining trees would thus frame the church entrance and improve light to this pedestrian entry. The remaining trees would also frame the view of the church building itself, thus providing a more aesthetic and accessible view of the church’s historic architecture.



Historic photograph of St. Mary's from the village.

Beech Tree

The beech tree is an inappropriate species for its location in very close proximity to the church building and with time may have a negative impact on the building itself. At this stage the tree roots are lifting and moving gravestone memorials and the ground of the historic graves in this section of the churchyard, as well as flags of the adjacent path. A replacement oak tree, a more appropriate species, has been planted on the adjacent edge of the churchyard and is establishing well.

The PCC proposes felling the Beech Tree before it can do more damage to graves and potentially the church building itself, whilst encouraging the growth of its replacement, an oak tree in a more appropriate spot.

There is a legal process we have to follow with the Diocese of Chester to do this work, which includes public notices and a period of public consultation, however we wanted to speak first to the congregation of St. Mary's Church.

If you have an opinion on this proposed work, positive or negative, please can you write any thoughts below (or on a separate piece of paper) and return to Rev. Andrew as soon as possible.

My thoughts on the proposed tree works at St. Mary's Church

(Note: The Quinquennial Inspection observation regarding existing damage to the sandstone wall, potentially by the tree roots, was noted later and thus not included in this consultation document.)

Appendix 2 – Congregation Consultation Feedback

The regular congregation of circa. 40 people were informed of the proposed works and feedback was solicited. 11 anonymous replies were received with the following comments:

- “For the good of St. Mary’s Church, I propose the beech tree be cut back”
- “A great idea, it will look like the church we were married in many many years ago.”
- “I think it’s a good plan”
- “Very necessary. Preservation of our church and opening the aspect to the church”
- “Beech Tree – it’s causing damage in a way which is going to distress people visiting family graves.”
- “Removing 3 of the yew trees is fantastic news but removing all 6 of them would be better. To see the church building in all its glory and new yew trees could be planted in a long border adjacent to the hedgerow, which I turn would be less clearing up and work for the people who look after the grounds. Felling the beech tree is more than positive...”
- “No objections to this idea. It would be nice to have a better view of the church from the street. As the beech tree is having a negative impact on the building too it makes sense for the work to be carried out”.
- “Go ahead with it”
- Yew Trees – in full agreement with the reasons set out for the work on these. Almost every part of the yew is poisonous, so it’s not an ideal tree for any place where young children will be.”
- “Beech Tree – This is a no brainer. Yew Trees – Taking them all down would be wrong. This is the ideal solution”.
- “I agree! It’s a shame to hide such a beautiful building with trees in front of it”.
- “I feel sad that this will include removing some of the Yew trees and the Beech tree. Having said this I do appreciate that we must be good stewards and carry out the work for the care of the church, church grounds and the surrounding public areas for the long term.”

FTS Ltd



Frankland Tree Services Ltd

Hillside
Mill Lane
Ashley
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA15 0RD
Tel: 0161 941 5410
Fax: 0161 929 5014

Revd A Knight
St Mary's Church
Manchester Road
Partington
Manchester M31 4FB

Estimate

Valid for six months

Client Ref :
FTS Ref : 32462/CF
Date : 04 April 2019

RE: Tree work at above address

Yews on front boundary - Counting from Left to right as viewed from the road - Fell to low stumps numbers 2, 4 & 6 and trim 1, 3 & 5 so as to improve light to entrance and provide a better frame for the view of the church

Beech close to above and front of Church (Inappropriate tree species so close to the building. Replacements already establishing well) - Fell to low stump £1,150.00

Notes - The time of year for this work is to suit the PCC. Time for Yew pruning is not of concern

We would hope have sufficient staff and equipment to complete the work in one day so as to minimise disruption

The management of the footpath during the operation would be our responsibility

Total excluding VAT	£1,150.00
VAT @ 20.00%	£230.00
Total	£1,380.00

Unless otherwise agreed all arising materials will be removed from site
All tree work carried out to BS3998 (Recommendations for Tree Work)
Any payments would be due on receipt of invoice

Rev. Dr Andrew Knight
Priest-in-Charge
St Mary's Church in the parish of Partington and Carrington

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