

Powering God's Northern Powerhouse:

**Sustainable church heating and
lighting conference for churches
across the North of England**

**St Mary's Church
Birkin, Knottingley**



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
Environment Programme

What prompted us to start the project?

- A church that was damp, cold and uninviting – note the high water table!
- A Parish hall that was falling down and too costly to maintain
- Being almost forced to make a decision to either close the church or look at selling the hall to raise the funds to re-order the church



How were the proposals developed from here?

Over a year of dialogue with stakeholders

Engagement with Diocese Building Department, surveyor, architect and Selby District Council

Plans drawn up by independent surveyor for the Parish Hall and submitted to SDC.

Planning granted after a year of battles and Parish Hall put up for sale by tender.

Parish Hall sold for £158k which paid back money lent to get us through to this stage and remainder sunk into the project.

What was our motivation for the options chosen?

- **Providing a warm, inviting, flexible space for our community**
- **Cost**
- **Our builder – M H Wood Building Services**
- **Knowing we were doing the right thing for our beautiful church – despite facing negativity from others**



What went well during the project?

- Making the decision to project manage the process ourselves was the turnaround point for us.
- Closer working relationships were developed with contractors as a result of daily meetings and updates – this led to being able to secure better prices for materials and my enthusiasm fed through to everyone, prompting them to feel part of the whole project and not just a contractor.





What obstacles did we come up against?

- Objections from individuals within the community
- Poor/lack of advice from our architect
- Juggling finances
- Archaeological finds

What was
the cost?

Professional fees - £15k

Heating Installation £70k

Electrical – Re-wiring, wiring for new heating system, lighting etc - £35k

Building work/materials - £50k

This does not include many hours of free labour from contractors and members of the community. Also donations of plant hire and materials from kind local businesses.



How long did the project take altogether?

- From the first letters to stakeholders in 2012 to completion in December 2016 - over four years!





How has the project improved worship and the offer to the community?

Need we say more?

What are the best features of the final installation?



Qualifies for the Renewable Heat Incentive



Keeps the church at a constant heat all year round



Just one annual service required and quarterly provision of readings



Clean and tidy



No need for storage of fuel/ordering of fuel

What works less well and what would we have done differently?



The readings can be confusing to take from the heat pump unless you are technical



Otherwise everything is working well



We would not have spent money on blue sky ideas from architects that would never have been given a faculty and should have realised earlier how much time and money we were wasting.

Final message for anyone contemplating the process

- Don't be afraid to challenge the professionals
- Take advice from those who have been recommended
- Be aware that you may come across negativity on your way
- **BE PATIENT!** The process is slow, but so, so worth it!!

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