



# VISION FOR ST LAURENCE'S

*Securing St Laurence's*

*Serving the community*

## Fundraising Case Statement

July 2016

## 1. Introduction

St Laurence's Church (Ludlow Parish Church) stands at the heart of the historic 'Marches' market town of Ludlow. The church is home to a vibrant Christian community that seeks to serve the town and proclaim the Gospel afresh in the 21st century; a beacon of faith to over 100 000 pilgrims and visitors each year. More specific information about our ministry can be found in the churches Mission Action Plan: *A Church Development Plan for St Laurence, Ludlow*. This statement sets out how we intend to improve our church plant to better enable mission.

The church building dominates the town and landscape around Ludlow, which itself contains over 500 listed buildings. It is the largest parish church in Shropshire and is one of England's prized merchant churches. Known as the 'Cathedral of the Marches', it is one of only 18 churches to be awarded five stars by Simon Jenkins in his *England's Thousand Best Churches*, where he refers to its contents as 'outstanding'.

St Laurence's church has a distinguished and well-documented history extending over 800 years. The first church on the site is reputed to have been built in the 12th century on the site of a burial mound which, according to legend, contained the skeletons of three Irish saints. The present church dates from 1199, though much of what can be seen today dates from between 1433 and 1471 when the church was extensively rebuilt. The present tower and chancel were added in perpendicular style, at the expense of the Palmers' Guild, a guild with members across England. The 'heart' of Prince Arthur, eldest son of Henry VII was interred in the chancel in 1502.

The Palmers richly adorned their church and established a choral tradition. Much of the mediaeval woodwork and stained glass from this time has survived. The 'treasures' of the church include:

- One of the most important assemblages of late mediaeval stained glass in England. The Jesse window in the Lady Chapel dates from c.1320. Most of the glass of the chancel windows dates from the 1430s, including the only surviving example in England of a pre-Reformation window showing the Ten Commandments and one of the largest hagiographical windows, depicting St. Laurence's life, in Europe
- A collection of historic timber fittings including five medieval screens and the only baldachino in England to have survived the reformation. As well as a splendidly carved set of 15th century misericords, or seats, each displaying scenes of contemporary life, mystical creatures or heraldry from the period
- Exceptionally fine chest tombs and monuments, largely from the 16th century, which mark the period when Ludlow was the seat of the Council of the Marches: it was from Ludlow that Wales and most of the border counties were ruled. More recent interments include the ashes of Adrian Jones and A E Housman
- The organ commissioned in 1764 from renowned Swiss organ builder, John Snetzler. The organ case is the largest surviving example of his work. Of the 4000 pipes of the present instrument, many are original
- The history of the bells and the famous carillon, first recorded in the 15th Century, is well-documented. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century mechanical clock and carillon were removed from the tower in the 1980s are now at ground level awaiting incorporation into a visitor experience project (Target 3 Phase 2). The bells were most recently restored and augmented in 2008

*Or come you home of Monday  
When Ludlow market hums  
And Ludlow chimes are playing  
'The conquering hero comes'*

A E Housman

## 2. Achievements

St Laurence's is much more than a monument to the past. With the help of a network of over 200 volunteers, we serve not just those who live and work in the town and its environs but all who visit Ludlow. We achieve this by:

- Ensuring that the building is open every day of the year
- Welcoming around 100,000 pilgrims and visitors annually, being the 'Number One' historic attraction in the area on TripAdvisor
- Hosting a diverse range of local groups and organisations, including some 40 concerts each year, some of which are broadcast on BBC Radio 3, as well as numerous schools services and exhibitions
- Promoting the good news of the Gospels through excellence in liturgy and music by nurturing our choral tradition and thereby providing much-needed opportunity for musical talent of all ages
- Fulfilling a civic role at major services, including Remembrance Sunday, Mayoral and Town services and the High Sheriff's Legal Services

In recent years we have:

### 1. Improved our hospitality towards visitors, including:

- Improved access and learning opportunities, through better signage, interpretation materials and website
- Developed a vibrant and profitable gift shop
- Engaged fully with social media opportunities, including:
  - Facebook – 700+ followers
  - Twitter – 1250+ followers
  - TripAdvisor – No. 1 for tours and activities in Ludlow, with a 4½ star average rating
- This has resulted in more than a doubling of visitor numbers and donations

### 2. Achieved approximately £900k of conservation and repair works to the building since 2008 to enable a sustainable ministry, including:

- Restoration and enhancement of Ludlow's famous peal of bells
- Major cleaning of and repairs to the organ
- Target 1: An extensive range of urgent conservation, including stained glass, monuments, wall paintings, paintings and textiles
- Target 2: New roofs and high-level masonry
- Provision of energy efficient boiler plant and LED lighting

### 3. Nurtured and encouraged the provision of music and the arts, including:

- Improving the building so that a wider range of groups can use it
- Acting as a catalyst for the formation of the *Music in Ludlow* consortium in 2008
- Establishing and promoting a successful annual series of organ recitals and a Summer Music Festival
- Providing a professional choral animateur to establish a weekly singing group for 4-8 yr olds
- Providing music outreach as part of our festival provision to over 2500 primary school children, including specially commissioned performances of Mystery Plays, organ and choral outreach projects

### 3. Challenges

We live in a generation where it is widely recognised that the role of church communities and church buildings are returning to that which was recognised in the mediaeval period i.e. a central space used for the benefit of the whole community, a 'thin place', a threshold between earth and heaven.

We are seeking to ensure sustainability for our parish church in the 21st century, in terms of ministry, finance, our impact on the environment and social responsibility/outreach. The church community and building sits at the heart of Ludlow and we hope to play our part in breathing new life into our market town, a beacon for all that is good.

To better enable our ministry we now seek to address fresh challenges in our church plant, such as:

*Conservation:* Major works have taken place in the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries. In the last two decades much work has been completed to keep the building watertight. A comprehensive annual maintenance plan has been implemented in more recent years. Substantial work is now long overdue on the unique and extensive collections of stained glass, timber, monuments and textiles to ensure long-term preservation for future generations. Specialist surveys have confirmed that without serious intervention the future of these precious elements is at risk. An opportunity exists to conserve and rebuild the clock at ground floor level as part of the improved visitor experience.

*Access:* The church needs to continue to enhance the visitor experience. Much of the interior is inaccessible to those who require level access. Deteriorating floor surfaces present a significant hazard to all users. Fixed pews prevent wider use of the nave by the worshipping community as well as wider community use.

*Facilities:* Very limited toilet and catering facilities are currently provided by freestanding 'pods'; storage for staging and other furniture is inadequate and unsightly. This not only causes practical difficulties by also fundamentally detracts from the aesthetic appearance of the building and its celebrated architecture.

*Interpretation & Learning:* The place of the church within the social history of Ludlow is not sufficiently understood within the community and region, despite its rich and significant heritage. There is an opportunity to tell the unique story of St Laurence's to all. The creation of a space within the church for interpretation and learning would enable school groups who visit to be better served and lead to the development of workshops and trails linked to the National Curriculum.

#### 4. Response

In 2008 the PCC instigated the *Vision for St Laurence* to enable more people to enjoy their heritage, secure it for the future and enable greater community engagement through improved access to the building and its heritage. Over a period of seven years we have carried out extensive and recognised consultations with church, local and wider communities, as well as specialist statutory bodies, to establish the need and develop plans.

Our core principles, arising out of these consultations are:

- Sharing our faith, our community and our building
- Caring for and nurturing the church community and its heritage
- Celebrating our faith, community, building, its history and heritage
- Creating a welcoming, inclusive and accessible community and building
- Enabling greater community engagement and growth in discipleship
- Contributing to the local and wider community

As of February 2016 the programme we would like to implement includes:

##### 1. Interim works 2016/7

Purpose: Continuing repair to roofs, stone masonry and drains to ensure a watertight building; as well as ongoing minor works of conservation i.e. textiles, timber and HMS Ludlow ensign.

Cost: in the region of £100k **Onsite spring 2017**

Funding: Roof repairs: £66k from three sources Listed Places of Worship Roof repair Fund, VAT reclaim and Conservation Trust. Other project from Grant Aid and Conservation Trust.

##### 2. Target 3 - Phase 1 2016/17

Purpose: To improve and enhance existing facilities and thereby increase community use of building ahead of major re-ordering

Cost: approximately £240k, see individual items for provisional sums

Funding: Projects completed as funds are secured either individually or in small packages

1. Nave :
  - a. Provision of new nave altar, lectern and adaptation of communion rail £12k
  - b. Interim floor covering, new carpet and cleaned tiles between choir stalls £6k
  - c. Provision of metal brackets to front pews to enable temporary removal £1k
2. South transept:
  - a. Removal of altar and communion rail and creation of multi-use space £2k
3. North and south aisles:
  - a. Removal of south aisle pews and pew plinths and creation of multi-use large space £15k
  - b. Removal of north aisle pew plinth to improve access £10k
4. Provision of 200-300 replacement Howe 40/4 chairs, improving storage and access £30-45k
5. Provision of new sound system and live streaming technology £65k
6. Provision of adapted organ console to release space under tower lantern £40k

7. Provision of Concert Grand Piano £55k
8. Heating Phase 2
  - a. Interim works to heating by addition of further radiators: chancel/vestry **complete**
  - b. Removal of old boiler, provision of new boiler house, installation of gas plant £30k
  - c. Installation of additional radiators: chancel £2k, Parvis room £4k **chancel complete**
  - d. Install humidifier to organ

### 3. Target 3 - Phase 2 2017+

Purpose: To carry out major re-ordering to enable better access to heritage and greater community use

Cost: In the region of £5 million

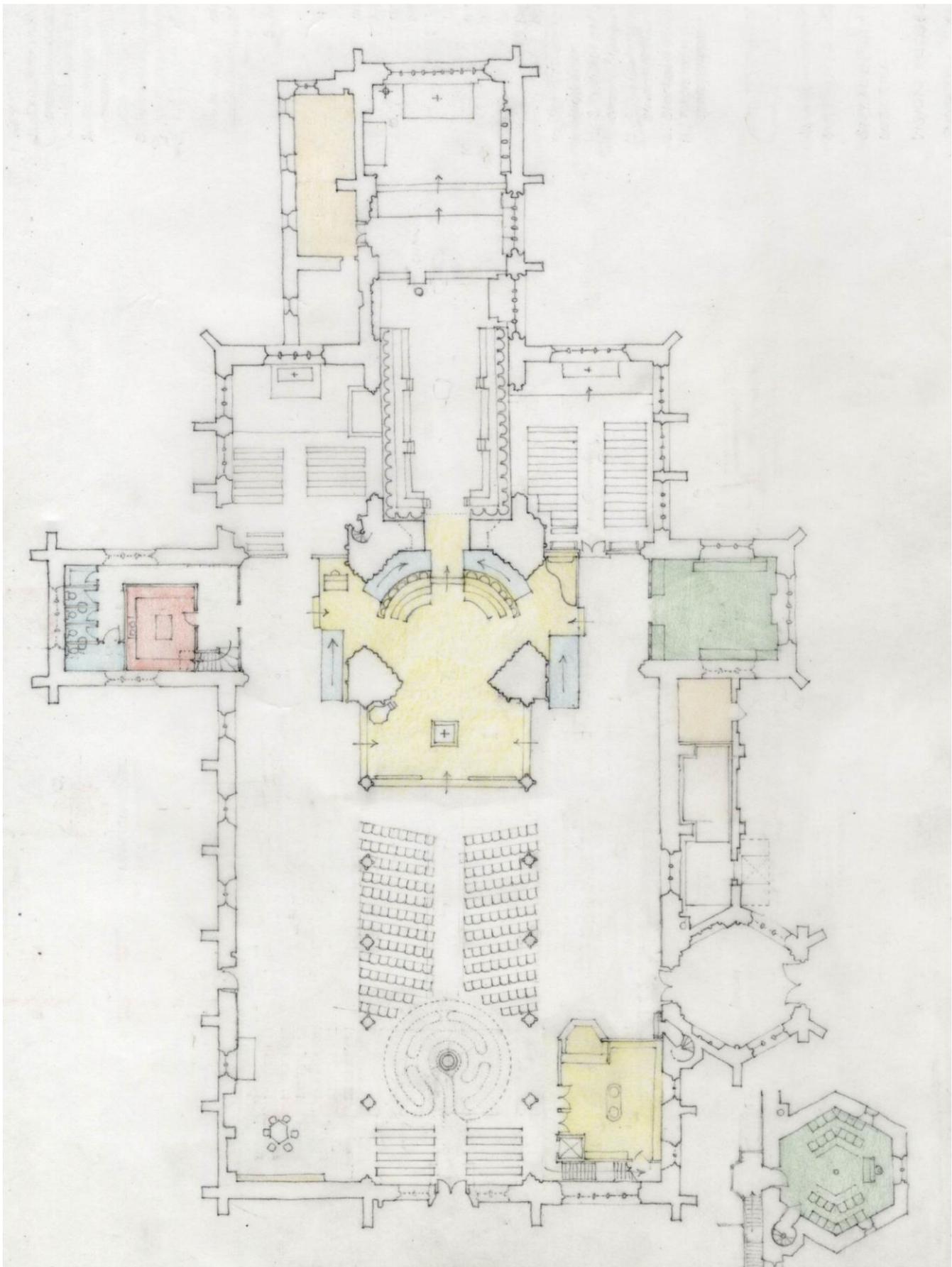
Funding: HLF bid, matched funding including: Conservation Trust for stained glass,

- i. Provision of replacement floors, including improved physical access
- ii. Improved shop (south aisle), kitchen and toilets (north transept)
- iii. Provision of additional glass doors south entrance
- iv. Provision of remaining Howe 40/4 chairs
- v. Major works of conservation (national/international significance) due by 2017:
  1. Stained Glass Phase 2:
    - a. Great East and Commandments windows
    - b. Remaining 5no. Chancel and St John's
    - c. South aisle 1no. window
  2. Timber Phase 1:
    - a. Organ case
    - b. North transept and St John's Screen
    - c. St John's Chapel: Baldachino
    - d. Misericords
  3. Historic clock and carillon £100k
  4. Monuments Phase 2: completing outstanding works £20k
  5. Textiles Phase 2: completing outstanding works £15k
  6. Roofs Phase 2: north transept £80K
  7. Porch and chancel tiled floor £15k

Alongside making these physical changes in the church, there is an exciting opportunity for greater emphasis on sharing the heritage of St Laurence's:

- A staff appointment will be made to develop and lead on interpretation and learning activities and resources, for people of all ages and abilities/disabilities
- Interpretation and learning resources will include guided tours, an audio guide, tactile resources, specialist guide books, signage and interpretation within the church
- Digital (via apps, online resources etc) and other innovative approaches will be introduced to interpret heritage and support learning
- We plan a programme of positive outreach engagement with schools and community groups to involve local people in particular in a range of activities which will 'open up' St Laurence's heritage to their new understanding and involvement
- St Laurence's Church is already a key visitor attraction for Ludlow. We will work with Ludlow Town Council, Shropshire Museum Service, Ludlow Castle and other tourism partners/agencies to ensure that the visitor experience to Ludlow is improved and more integrated

- Investments made at St Laurence's through this project will benefit the Ludlow visitor economy as a whole by supporting jobs and training opportunities. There is known potential to work with Ludlow College and others on this
- We will develop new volunteering opportunities, creating new roles for volunteers and making volunteering attractive in different ways for a wider range of people. Skills development / employment-relevant experience will be available for those who are looking for this alongside broader benefits from personal achievement, social contact and structure



## 5. Proposed fundraising strategy

In order to deliver a project of this scale, and meet the immediate needs of the community, we consider that a phased approach is necessary.

We plan to secure phase 1 through a variety of applications to grant bodies such as Awards for All, Garfield Weston, All Church Trust and National Churches Trust, amongst others.

To secure phase 2, St Laurence's will need to make a major application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). We are acutely aware that competition is stiff and there are no guarantees that an application would be successful. In addition, HLF will require evidence of our capacity to provide complementary funding, raising significant funds from elsewhere to meet the non-eligible costs. We believe that it is prudent to estimate that in the region of **£1 million** will need to be found from Ludlow and its wider constituency of interest; with other funding from sources including grant-making trusts e.g. landfill tax funds and a social investment model. Additionally, once a positive outcome has been secured from HLF, we will instigate a major resource study to identify local major donors and supporters.

## 6. Summary

Without this initiative St Laurence's will not be fully able to respond to the evolving needs of the local community and all who worship and visit. This is a critically important chapter in St Laurence's long history. The key aims of this plan are to secure the future of the church for the 21st century and to extend its role within the wider community. We possess an enormously rich heritage as a place of worship, welcome and learning, but need investment to be able to meet future needs.

We hope that you share our Vision for St Laurence's. We see so much potential that could be realised through this project, and our ambitions are high.

Should a successful bid to HLF be secured we will seek advice and guidance from supporters - those whom we believe have an interest in St Laurence's future role in our community. We are approaching you in the hope that you may be willing to contribute your thoughts, confidentially via our professional advisors, on our proposals. This would help us to ensure we are moving in the right direction and are maximising the opportunities for future success.