

Cambridge Judge Business School

REACH Ely Case Study Series

Reimagining Churches as Community Assets
for the Common Good

ST ANDREW & ST MARY GRANTCHESTER

Text, design, and photography

Dr Timur Alexandrov

Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation
Cambridge Judge Business School

**REACH Ely (Reimagining Churches as
Community Assets for the Common Good)**
is a multi-partner research project that
aims to help communities make fuller use
of their churches.

Editorial board

Dr Helen Haugh

Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation
Cambridge Judge Business School

Geoffrey Hunter

Diocese of Ely

The project is implemented by

**Centre for Social Innovation at
Cambridge Judge Business School
and the Diocese of Ely**

*with the generous support of Allchurches Trust
and Historic England*

www.reachely.org

The challenges facing church communities and their buildings have been extensively studied in the light of declining church attendance in the United Kingdom over several decades. REACH Ely aims to address the less-well-understood opportunities for churches to engage and reconnect with the 97.7 per cent of the local communities in the Diocese of Ely who do not attend their parish churches.

With the absence of universal determinants of success and failure of churches in the community engagement context, the REACH Ely project will provide an understanding of the relationship between communities and wider use of church buildings as well as the contribution that churches make to the common good. The project will determine community values, needs and opportunities that can be used in the most effective way to ensure a win-win outcome for communities and sustainable future of church buildings.

The **case study series** is based on in-depth interviews and observations about church building use with informants from a subset of deaneries and parishes in the Diocese of Ely, supplemented with secondary information about the communities they represent. The purpose of the case study is to unearth various church experiences in renovating and envisioning their buildings as missional and social spaces, engaging with local and wider communities, addressing current challenges, and learning from their practice.

The **Glossary** is a separate document that accompanies the case study series. It is available as a download from the project's website www.reachely.org

On the cover: Details of the pelican mosaic in the chancel of Grantchester church.

Copyright © 2020 University of Cambridge. All rights reserved. The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support from The Ely Diocesan Board of Finance under research grant ref RG95970.

ST ANDREW & ST MARY GRANTCHESTER

Church Category: Suburban

Deanery: Cambridge South

Address: 44 High St, Grantchester,
Cambridge CB3 9NF

Website: www.church.grantchester.org.uk



Summary

Buildings and Artefacts: Grade II* building; Small kitchen in the vestry under the tower; Separate disabled access WC in churchyard; Small number of pews removed at the back of the church; Open churchyard; Saxon window; Norman font and patterns; Decorated chancel; Victorian stained glass; Jacobean pulpit; Fragments of Romanesque stonework; Memorials and mosaic

Congregation to Population Ratio: 40 / 548

Fundraising: Friends of the church

Income Generation: Filming of the television series 'Grantchester'; Direct debit; Tourist donations; Weekly collection and bequests

Communications: Website; Parish magazine; Weekly pew sheet; Information stand with publications on sale; Postcards; Booklets; Short guide to the church; Visitors' Book; Church noticeboards; Posters; Mailing list

Community Engagement: Churchyard working parties; Hymns and Pimms; Concerts; Joint events with St Mark's in Newnham; Pizza by Candlelight; School services; Mothers' Union.

ROOTS

Profile

Grantchester is a small village in the district of South Cambridgeshire, located two miles to the south-west of the city of Cambridge. It sits on the banks of the river Granta (also known as the Cam) and occupies largely low-lying ground of around 566 hectares (1,400 acres). Despite its proximity to the city, it retains a rural as well as historic charm and receives large numbers of visitors, particularly in the summer months. It is possible to punt or walk across the meadows from the city. Historic literary connections with the University of Cambridge together with a more recent popular television series 'Grantchester' filmed in the church and the village make it a favourite stop-off point for visitors to Cambridge from all over the world.

Historically, Grantchester's population was largely engaged in agrarian occupations, particularly in the production of wheat, barley, and malt. Much of the land and property was owned by university colleges, notably Merton (Oxford) and Corpus Christi (Cambridge). As part of its endowment, Corpus Christi College has been patron of the parish church since 1352. A century later, King's College Cambridge acquired the Lordship of the Manor. For several centuries, beginning in the 1560s, the incumbent of St Andrew and St Mary church was appointed by Corpus Christi College. Both Cambridge colleges have maintained their influence over village developments. On the Trumpington side of the river was the watermill mentioned

in Chaucer. Later, Grantchester had its own corn mill, spanning the millstream at the lowest point of the village, and owned by Merton College Oxford.

According to the 2011 census, Grantchester had a population of 540. The community these days consists of long-time residents, academics from nearby Cambridge, and London commuters. The M11 motorway lies to the west of Grantchester and there is a fast and frequent train service for commuters from Cambridge to London King's Cross station.

Grantchester has a village hall, four public houses, and a very popular tearoom, the Orchard Tea Garden. The latter has strong literary connections with the Bloomsbury Group and the First World War poet Rupert Brooke whose wistful poem 'The Old Vicarage, Grantchester' recalls a period when he lodged there: '*Stands the Church clock at ten to three? And is there honeystill for tea?*'. The old vicarage is now owned by Dame Mary Archer, a noted scientist, and Lord Jeffrey Archer, the well-known novelist and former politician. The village also has a cricket club, a tennis club and a number of groups such as the 'After Eights'. It is reputed to have the highest number of Nobel prize winners in the world. The larger village of Trumpington (*See REACH Ely case study Trumpington*) lies to the south-east of Grantchester and has a wide range of shops and services.

The church of St Andrew and St Mary lies at the southern end of Grantchester.





Top: Eastern view of Grantchester church. Middle: Church tower and northern entrance; Village road sign.
Bottom: View of the church from Mill Way during the filming of the TV series 'Grantchester'.



Building

Although there are 12th century fragments embedded in the walls of the church, the current building – Grade II* listed – dates to the 14th and 15th centuries, and consists of a west tower, a nave, a south aisle, and a chancel. The church of St Andrew and St Mary is constructed from clunch rubblestone and fieldstone and is rendered, with dressed clunch ashlar to the chancel. A small c.15th century transeptal chapel had been demolished by the mid 1700s. A small porch was added in the 16th century.

The church was heavily restored in the 19th century including the addition of a new south aisle. The chancel is particularly fine and is light and bright, the rood screen having been removed at some stage. A clock, widely known because of Rupert Brooke's poem, was installed in 1870 or 1877. There are three church bells in the tower.

There is a small kitchen area in the vestry under the tower and a disabled access WC by the church gates – there are no WC facilities in the church building. Recent renovations include new lighting and a sound system, both funded by income from the filming of the TV series 'Grantchester' (see *Income Generation*). These are particularly helpful for weddings and funerals. A French drain was installed all around the church to remedy a damp problem. Work is planned on the tower and the vestry, which will bring the kitchen area up to date. A small number of pews have been removed at the back of the church.

The building can accommodate 180 comfortably, although as many as 250 people attend the annual carol service. The churchyard, open for burials, has four sections and visitors will find the graves of numerous notable residents, including many Cambridge scholars, from scientists to theologians. The church is open from dawn to dusk.



Pages 4-5: Panoramic view of the chancel and the nave.



Glass doors of the vestry and church noticeboards.

Artefacts

A small Saxon window and interlace panels, Norman zigzag patterns, and 12th century faces are evidence of earlier buildings. The well-lit chapel – an example of the Decorated period – may have been the work of craftsmen from the Lady Chapel workshop at Ely, according to Nikolaus Pevsner, an architectural historian. The stained glass is largely Victorian, featuring the saints and prophets. There is a Jacobean pulpit that probably came from the chapel of Corpus Christi College Cambridge, and a large and plain Norman font. A wall memorial, crowned with an urn complete with gilded flames bursting from the top, commemorates a fellow of Clare Hall in Cambridge who died in 1690 aged 32 years.

A number of fragments of Romanesque stonework are set into the wall at the south-east corner, including part of an arch decorated with chevrons and several knotwork-pattern borders. The organ, built in 1851, was restored at the end of the 20th century. A fine mosaic of a pelican – a reference to Christ and a symbol of self-sacrifice – pecking its own breast to feed its young on its blood, can be seen on the floor by the communion table in the chancel. This coat of arms, which is also in the churchyard, is a reference to Corpus Christi College that has been Patron of the church since 1380.

Grantchester church is relatively crime-free, although valuable artefacts are stored under lock and key.

“The village is ideally placed down the river from Cambridge [which] is the big pull for people, a walk or a punt over here is a lovely thing to do. And the church benefits because people like to pop into the church building for a quiet moment, or a look at where the TV show is filmed. Grantchester was already quite well known... and now they come even more so because of the TV show... we are on the tourist trail. It’s a very well placed village that has remained, and because of the meadows and river that separates Grantchester from the city, will remain a village. It’s part of the appeal of the village – very close to, and accessible from, the city, but a separate little oasis.”

Revd Rachel Rosborough

Vicar



Top: View from the nave towards the chancel and East window. Middle: The chancel and East window decorated with fresh flowers. Bottom: Norman font and 'Grantchester' TV series banner stand by the west wall; View from the nave towards the vestry and the organ.



RUNNING

Team

The ministry team of the church of St Andrew and St Mary includes a part-time priest in charge whose benefice also includes St Mark's church in Newnham – originally a daughter church of St Andrew and St Mary Grantchester (*See REACH Ely case study Newnham*), two churchwardens, a shared church administrator and part-time cleaners (paid). A new curate has been appointed to start in the summer of 2020.

Grantchester church is part of an informal partnership in South Cambridge that also includes Trumpington and Newnham.

Religious Services

A weekly Sunday service is held at Grantchester church at 11.15 a.m. The vicar and assistant priest shares duties with the parish church of St Mark's in Newnham, Cambridge. On a fifth Sunday, joint service is hosted in either Grantchester, St Mark's (Newnham), or St Mary and St Michael church (Trumpington).

Once a month there is an evening prayer service at 6.30 p.m. and a Communion service at 8 a.m. The church hosts occasional school services. An outdoor service has been held at Easter time on Grantchester Meadows and a Gift Service was held with donations going to a local women's refuge. Special services can attract up to 250 worshippers. Attendance numbers range from 15 to 45 at the weekly services. Like many village churches, many of its members are over 60 but there are people of all ages who attend regularly and the monthly 'family' service generally has the largest congregation.

Covid-19 lockdown. Following advice issued by the Church of England in spring 2020 relating to coronavirus, Grantchester church building was closed and all services were cancelled. The vicar the Revd Rachel Rosborough developed some **resources** to help with worship and prayer at home. These were posted on the **church website** and included **weekly posts** on an order of service and a reflection for use at home. The vicar led the service at 10.15 a.m. via **Zoom** and daily Morning and Night prayers were shared on the website.

In addition, Grantchester church website shares links to other churches **live streaming** Morning and Evening Prayer and Compline, and a guide to Bible study method. The vicar has shared her **blog** and encouraged the community to contact her by **email** or **telephone**. There is also a central church **mailing list** to enable the community to communicate updates.

Parish Share

In 2019, parish share expenditure was £22,288.25

Fundraising

Friends of the Church. The Friends group includes both residents and non-residents, worshippers and non-worshippers, who come together to raise funds for specific restoration projects and the general upkeep of the church. The annual membership fee is £5. The most recent project was the installation of new oak gates. The Friends also encourage visitors to come as tourists and pilgrims, and publish an annual newsletter about the history and current life of Grantchester church. An annual event is held for the Friends group members.

Donations. St Andrew and St Mary's church receives a good income from the filming but also has occasional fundraising activities as filming income is not guaranteed. Weekly collections and regular giving by church members, and a number who do not come to the church but live in the village, pay for the day to day running of the church and collections from certain 'festival' services are given to agreed charitable organisations. A percentage of the film income was also given to charities.

Income Generation

Parish giving provides a regular income for the church via weekly collections and standing orders.

Tourist donations. There is a collection box in the church for the many visitors to the church and there are **publications** for sale.

Television series. The church's large additional income stream for the past five years has come from the hiring of the church for the filming of the TV series 'Grantchester'. While the majority of this has been used for restoration projects and upgrades to facilities, some of the income has been donated to charitable causes. The TV series attracts a large number of visitors to the church and has resulted in an increase in donations.

Restricted fund. The church has some historic reserves which are specifically intended for particular projects, such as the restoration of the tower. It also receives **legacies** from those with a connection to the church.



Stained glass in the East window (top), south wall of the chancel (middle) and the nave (bottom).

Communications

The **parish magazine** *Grantchester* is published monthly, to which the majority of residents subscribe. The vicar writes a regular piece for the magazine, as do other organisations in the village. The parish magazine is also distributed outside the village and is seen as the main channel for getting news out to the community.

Grantchester church runs its own **website** and a weekly **pew sheet** is given out to the congregation on Sundays. At the back of the church, there is a well-organised **information stand** that displays publications on sale: the parish magazine, **postcards**, a *Short Guide to the Church*, **booklets** about the history of the church and the village, and TV series **leaflets**. There is a moneybox for visitors. Another stand with church literature and leaflets is at the back of the south aisle. The church maintains a **Visitors' Book**. Outdoor **noticeboards** are at the entrance. Upcoming services and events are advertised on **posters** distributed around the village. The vicar is trying to get residents to sign up to a **mailing list** so that she can be more proactive in informing them about the church's activities. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the mailing list has been very successful.

"We have no problem attracting visitors, lots of people come... The village generally feels positively towards the church. They want it to be there. I know of several individuals who've said to me "We think it's really important, we're happy to help but we probably won't come regularly". And I really want everyone in the village to feel that they could come along, any time.

So there're two things. There's something about 'are we attractive?' 'Is what we do appealing to people?' Of course, everybody's different, so my response is to try different things from time to time, while maintaining a regular, familiar service each week. But I think the other thing is that I don't just want to attract people to the church for the sake of the church. I would like to engage people in issues around faith. If they come to church as well, that is great!"

Revd Rachel Rosborough
Vicar



Top: View of the nave from the entrance; Seating arrangement in the nave. Middle rows: The chancel and candle stands; Information stand with publications on sale at the back of the nave. Bottom: The font and the literature display; The model of Grantchester church made by Samuel Page Widnall in c. 1876.

REACH

Community

Three **churchoyard working parties a year** include weeding and edging, the trimming of hedges and mowing of the two meadow areas that grow very well in the churchoyard. Traditional methods were used to cut the meadow grass. Tea and cakes are served afterwards.

Community involvement. The village is seen as particularly welcoming to newcomers. Grantchester church tries to be inclusive and an integral part of the wider community. St Andrew and St Mary's church is a particularly popular venue for weddings.

Events

Hymns and Pimms. About 60 villagers came together on a Sunday afternoon in June 2019 for the first-ever Hymns & Pimms event. Pimms was served and everyone chatted outside in the churchoyard. The event then moved into the church, where seven people introduced their favourite hymns.

Concerts. There are occasional concerts held in the church, for example the Corpus Christi Choir Concert held in early December.

Joint events with St Mark Newnham. The congregation recently joined with worshippers at St Mark's to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the establishment of that parish. St Mark's had previously been a daughter church of St Andrew and

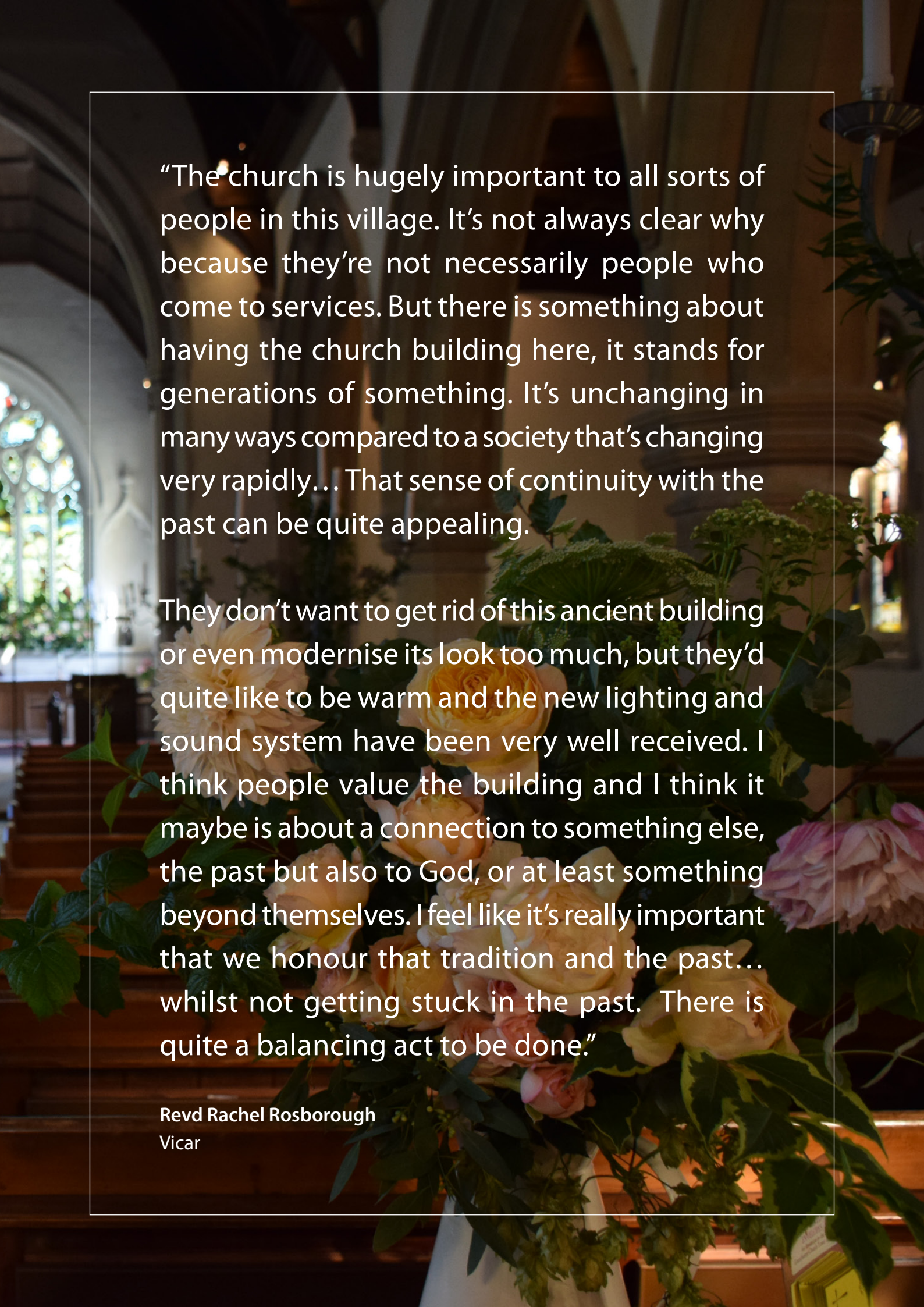
St Mary's. The celebrations included an 8 a.m. service at Grantchester followed by breakfast and a walk across the meadows to Newnham for the 10 a.m. service. Newnham church is a modern building and provides a more comfortable and accessible space for children's activities and concerts. St Mark's has a busy arts programme (*See REACH Ely case study Newnham*).

Children & Families. In recent years there have been a number of events for children and families, including the now annual 'Pizza by Candlelight' at the beginning of advent. Children and parents arrive to a dark church and take part in a hunt for items to build an advent wreath while gradually lighting the church candles and learning about advents, finishing with pizza in the chancel. Grantchester church has also held a treasure hunt in the churchoyard, pancake parties and craft sessions.

Engagement

School services. Grantchester school was closed on the 1980s and joined with Barton. Since then, Grantchester has links with a school in Barton, attended by some of the children from the village. Services are held on special occasions, such as the annual carol service.

Mother's Union. This is nowadays a small group and although it was originally church-based, it now meets in the village Reading Room, which is attached to the village hall.

A photograph of a church interior. In the foreground, there is a large, vibrant bouquet of flowers, including several large yellow and pink roses and a large white dahlia. The background shows the interior of a church with wooden pews, a stained glass window on the left, and a candle in a holder on the right. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a serene atmosphere.

“The church is hugely important to all sorts of people in this village. It’s not always clear why because they’re not necessarily people who come to services. But there is something about having the church building here, it stands for generations of something. It’s unchanging in many ways compared to a society that’s changing very rapidly... That sense of continuity with the past can be quite appealing.

They don’t want to get rid of this ancient building or even modernise its look too much, but they’d quite like to be warm and the new lighting and sound system have been very well received. I think people value the building and I think it maybe is about a connection to something else, the past but also to God, or at least something beyond themselves. I feel like it’s really important that we honour that tradition and the past... whilst not getting stuck in the past. There is quite a balancing act to be done.”

Revd Rachel Rosborough
Vicar



Clockwise from top: Bishop of Ely, the Right Reverend Stephen Convey visits Grantchester church; Easter service 2019; Church services; After service coffee; A Confirmation Service (Photos by Grantchester church).

REFLECTIONS

Challenges

Engagement with children and young people

The children and young people in the village attend several schools and often participate in activities all over the city. Although the Grantchester community is generally close-knit, there is a lack of provision for the younger generation to meet up and socialise. Although St Mark Newnham has a children and families' minister, there is no similar position at St Andrew and St Mary Grantchester. The church does run a couple of events for children each year outside its calendar of services.

Small and senior congregation

The congregation attending regular services is small and is largely represented by the over 60s. This has an impact on the number of volunteers able to contribute to the upkeep of the church.

Outdated facilities

The Grantchester church team is looking to upgrade its kitchen facilities but this will need to wait until the outer walls have dried out following the installation of the French drain. The vestry is often in use but there is no hot water and the space is not used well. The heating is also inadequate for the winter months.

Lack of demand for community use

The village has a village hall and there are modern facilities for clubs and events in nearby Newnham and Trumpington. Hence, although the Grantchester village and the vicar are keen to see the church used during weekdays, it is used largely for services rather than as a community space. However, the church is open every day and tends to have a steady stream of visitors into the building.

Future income generation

Although the filming of the television series has produced something of a windfall, the church will need to ensure its future needs can be met from regular giving, reserves and the activities of its Friends group. The church is reluctant to make frequent appeals for funds to the community and has not needed to do so in recent years.

Lack of personnel and volunteers

Although there are rotas for various roles, e.g., flower arranging and opening the church, there are insufficient volunteers to run the church. A shared church office manager has been appointed to alleviate the shortage of personnel at both churches.

Maintaining an ancient listed building

Grantchester church is currently well funded but any major repairs, for example, to the roof, would be a considerable burden on funds.



Lessons Learned

To foster collaboration with other churches

The congregations of St Andrew and St Mary Grantchester and of St Mark Newnham come together for various acts of worship and celebration. As the vicar is responsible for both parishes, events can be more easily promoted to both. Joint services are also held with Trumpington as part of the South Cambridge partnership.

To be open and responsive to change

The church welcomes the increased number of visitors generated by interest in the TV series located in Grantchester and in the church in particular. Although Grantchester was already well known because of its associations with the University of Cambridge and the Bloomsbury Group, church members have had to acquire negotiation skills to deal with the TV company and to accommodate the number of visitors attracted by the series. Additionally, despite the use of the church as a setting for the TV series brings a lot of visitors to the church and the village, it also causes some disruption. The TV company has worked hard to ensure good relations with the community to counteract this.

To adapt the church building for more flexible and a wider use

Work such as the new kitchen facilities and external work to remedy the damp in the building will allow wider use of the building by the community. A small number of pews have been removed at the rear of the church to create a meeting space.

To integrate the church and the community

The special services in particular bring the church and the community together. The vicar is preparing a mailing list to be more proactive in informing people about what

is going on. The Friends group is made up of supporters of the church in the village and beyond. Volunteers from the village have helped with the management of the churchyard.

To be open to people who might feel overwhelmed or intimidated by the church

The church makes a particular effort to extend a welcome to new worshippers and visitors. The team know that they need to work hard to ensure that people feel welcomed to come to the church, even though the village is seen as a very friendly community. Taking the church out of the building will also be key in this, such as the outdoor service held on Grantchester Meadows.

To endeavour to be inclusive in the kinds of services and events arranged

The church tries to offer different types of services and events to appeal to a wide section of the community. What works in one community may not necessarily work in another. Providing hospitality, in terms of offering food and drink at events, is an important part of their ethos. The new lighting and sound system and a more efficient heating system will play a part in making the building more welcoming.

To provide a sense of continuity for the community

The church provides a connection with the past and is very important to large numbers of people in the village, whether they attend services or not. Changes to the fixtures and fittings have to be carefully managed. Visitors often comment on the peace and beauty of the church. However, the team realise that it is important not just to focus on the building but on the people who use it.



“The challenge in one sense is like every church in the land, is we’re told all the time that numbers are declining and so what’s the future. I refuse to get too worried about that, I want, and I will continue to make this place a place for everybody. A place of welcome and a place that provides worship services.”

Revd Rachel Rosborough
Vicar

**REACH Ely: Reimagining Churches as
Community Assets for the Common Good**

Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation

Cambridge Judge Business School
University of Cambridge
Trumpington Street
Cambridge CB2 1AG
socialinnovation@jbs.cam.ac.uk
www.jbs.cam.ac.uk

Diocese of Ely

Ely Diocesan Office
Bishop Woodford House
Barton Road
Ely CB7 4DX
T: +44 (0) 1353 652701
www.elydiocese.org

www.reachely.org