

Cambridge Judge Business School

REACH Ely Case Study Series

Reimagining Churches as Community Assets
for the Common Good

HOLY TRINITY HADDENHAM



Text, design and photography

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**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.

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The project is implemented by

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

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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: Framed portrait of Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus in the church.

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HOLY TRINITY HADDENHAM

Church Category: Rural

Deanery: Ely

Address: Church Lane, Haddenham,
Ely CB6 3TB

Parish Council website:

www.haddenham-pc.gov.uk

Grunty Fen Churches group:

www.gruntyfenchurches.btck.co.uk



Summary

Buildings and Artefacts: Grade I listed building; Meeting room with small kitchen facilities and glass walls; Pews removed from north and south aisles; 14th-century font; Chancel floor tiles; Marble monuments; Brasses

Congregation to Population Ratio: 18 / 3,393

Fundraising: Flower festival; Donations; Quiz nights; Occasional legacies

Income Generation: Parish giving; Small income from events; Tradecraft products sale

Communications: Parish Council website; Facebook page; YouTube channel; Newsheet; Parish magazine The Village Voice; Posters; Noticeboard

Community Engagement: Caring for God's Acre; Hosting events; Collection point; Ely foodbank; Walk of Witness; Flower Festival; Café Church; Cream teas; Soup and More; Summer BBQ; Nativity plays; Sleepovers; Village picnic; Collaboration with schools; Clubs for children and young people; Mothers' Union; Integration into village activities.

ROOTS



Profile

The East Cambridgeshire village of Haddenham lies just over seven miles (11 km) to the south-west of the city of Ely and 15 miles (24 km) to the north of Cambridge. It lies in the Fens in a rural area to the west of the A10 road, with easy access to the A14 and A11 roads. Although Haddenham once had its own railway station, the nearest station is now at Ely, offering links to London, Peterborough, and Kings Lynn.

The population of Haddenham was recorded as 3,344 in the 2011 census, which includes the nearby village of Aldreth which sits within the parish. In the Middle Ages, Haddenham and Aldreth commanded the principal land entrance to the Isle of Ely and derived a special importance from that fact. The location of the manor brought great prosperity to Haddenham: during the 13th century, there were six fisheries producing 5,000 sticks of eels. However, the village has also been subject to devastating floods, with the last major one taking place in 1947. Aldreth has a Village Centre, housed in a former Baptist chapel, and which is currently home to a pre-school group. It also provides a venue for events and classes. The villages of Wilburton and Stretham are its nearest neighbouring settlements.

Haddenham village amenities include the Arkenstall Village Centre, formerly the village school, which now offers three rooms for hire, including a main room and stage. It has a well-equipped kitchen and provides an access point for library loans. Haddenham Arts Centre has a café, which hosts events such as talks, arts, and craft workshops and exhibitions. Village Bowls Club and Sports and Social Club are a short distance from Holy Trinity Haddenham. There is a primary school, a library, several shops, a post office, and a public house. The Haddenham Steam Rally and Heavy Horse Show are popular annual events held on the outskirts of the village.

In the centre of the village sits the Methodist church with its own café that is open four mornings a week. There is also a Baptist church on Station Road, Haddenham.



*Top: Views of Haddenham church from south and north sides.
Bottom: Exterior of the south transept window; North porch with entrance doors.*

Building

The Grade I listed building of Holy Trinity church is located to the north of the village centre at the top of Haddenham Hill, overlooking Ely, giving the church the appearance of a fortress church. There was at one time a church hall, but this was sold and the funds put into the Village Centre.

Historically, the rectory of Haddenham was considered to be of high value, especially during the Middle Ages. Hence, there were frequent disputes between the bishops and archdeacons of Ely regarding the rights of the latter in the Isle. The church of the Holy Trinity was constructed gradually during the 13th century, beginning with the chancel, and is built of ashlar and rubble with leaded roofs. The building consists of chancel, north vestry, clerestoried nave, transepts, aisles, north and south porches, and west tower. The transepts were refashioned in the 15th century, the chancel arch rebuilt in the same period, and another stage added to the tower. In 1876, a drastic restoration included the rebuilding of the tower with six bells, as well as the greater part of the walling of the aisles and transepts, and the addition of the vestry and north porch.

In 1897, the churchyard was enlarged and new gates erected in commemoration of the 60th year of Queen Victoria's reign. In 2000, a new meeting room with small kitchen facilities was constructed in the north aisle, facilitated by the removal of pews. The room is largely made of glass so as not to obscure the wall memorials and provides a workspace for church groups. It was funded in part by the Millennium Commission, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Haddenham Charities, Haddenham Parish Council and local donors. Subsequently, more pews were removed from the south aisle to create more usable space. Storage heaters were installed in 2006-07 to alleviate the residual damp and cold within the building.

The church has recently undergone its quinquennial inspection and renovations advised in the report could amount to £600,000. There has been a discussion about the installation of permanent ramps to allow better access for the disabled. Holy Trinity church is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The church closes at this time as there had previously been problems with a small number of schoolchildren as they arrived in the village after school. The building can accommodate 200 people.



Top: View of the nave from the chancel. Middle: Seating arrangement in the nave; South aisle space free of pews.
Bottom: View from the south aisle; South transept area with chairs.



Artefacts

The 14th-century font is curiously carved and is lead-lined on a stem with four griffins. There is also an earlier and very plain font which was dug up in the churchyard and which is presumed to have belonged to the earlier church on this site. The pulpit is c.1876 in limestone with marble shafts at the angles. The chancel floor has tiles depicting the ministry of Christ.

The north aisle contains a white marble wall monument dated 1677 dedicated to John Towers and a limestone and white marble wall monument dated 1700 dedicated to William March. The church has brasses commemorating John Godfrey (1454) and his wife, and William Noyon, Rector and Canon of York, Lincoln and Chichester (1405).



Panoramic view of Holy Trinity church interior.



Clockwise: North aisle area with the meeting room; Meeting room with kitchen facilities; View from the nave towards entrance doors and the meeting room.

RUNNING

Team

Holy Trinity Church is part of the Grunty Fen Group of churches, which also includes St Peter Wentworth, St Peter Wilburton, and St Andrew Witchford. Haddenham church shares a vicar with Wilburton, who is also the priest-in-charge at Wentworth and Witchford. The vicar is supported in her ministry by a number of associate priests and lay ministers. In addition, Holy Trinity has two churchwardens and a treasurer. An administrator supports the four churches.

Religious Services

The congregation is fairly small and most worshippers are over 60 years of age. A service of Holy Communion is held at Haddenham on the first and fourth Sunday of the month at 11 a.m. There is also Evensong at 6 p.m. on the first Sunday. On the second Sunday, Morning Prayer is held at 9.15 a.m. Café Church takes place on the third Sunday at 11 a.m. When there is a fifth Sunday in the month, a joint service of Holy Communion is held at one of the churches within the group. Some of these services are lay-led. Joint services celebrate special days within the calendar, e.g. Good Friday, Harvest, and Easter. The local primary school holds their Christmas service at the church and visits from time to time for lessons in religious education. On Education Sunday, a service is held in the local school and a monthly service is held in the village's sheltered housing.

Covid-19 impact. Church services and other activities were temporarily suspended during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. During the period of lockdown, the church was keeping in touch with people by **livestreaming** its services and virtually commemorating the VE Day via **Zoom** and sharing service sheets and news updates on **Facebook**. In June 2020, the church re-opened in accordance with social distancing guidelines. A local volunteer has spent much of lockdown cleaning, polishing and fixing various items from the church. The church also started **praying team** and began experimenting with sharing videos of the Morning Prayer in a Celtic tradition on its new **YouTube channel**.

Fundraising

Flower Festival is the largest annual fundraising event. A variety of other events are held that contribute smaller sums to funds, such as **quizzes**.

Donations and events. The church is financed by regular donations from just 16 people and other income is derived from events held during the year and occasional legacies.

Without an official Friends group, residents who are non-regular churchgoers help out with the maintenance of the church and events and festivals.

Income Generation

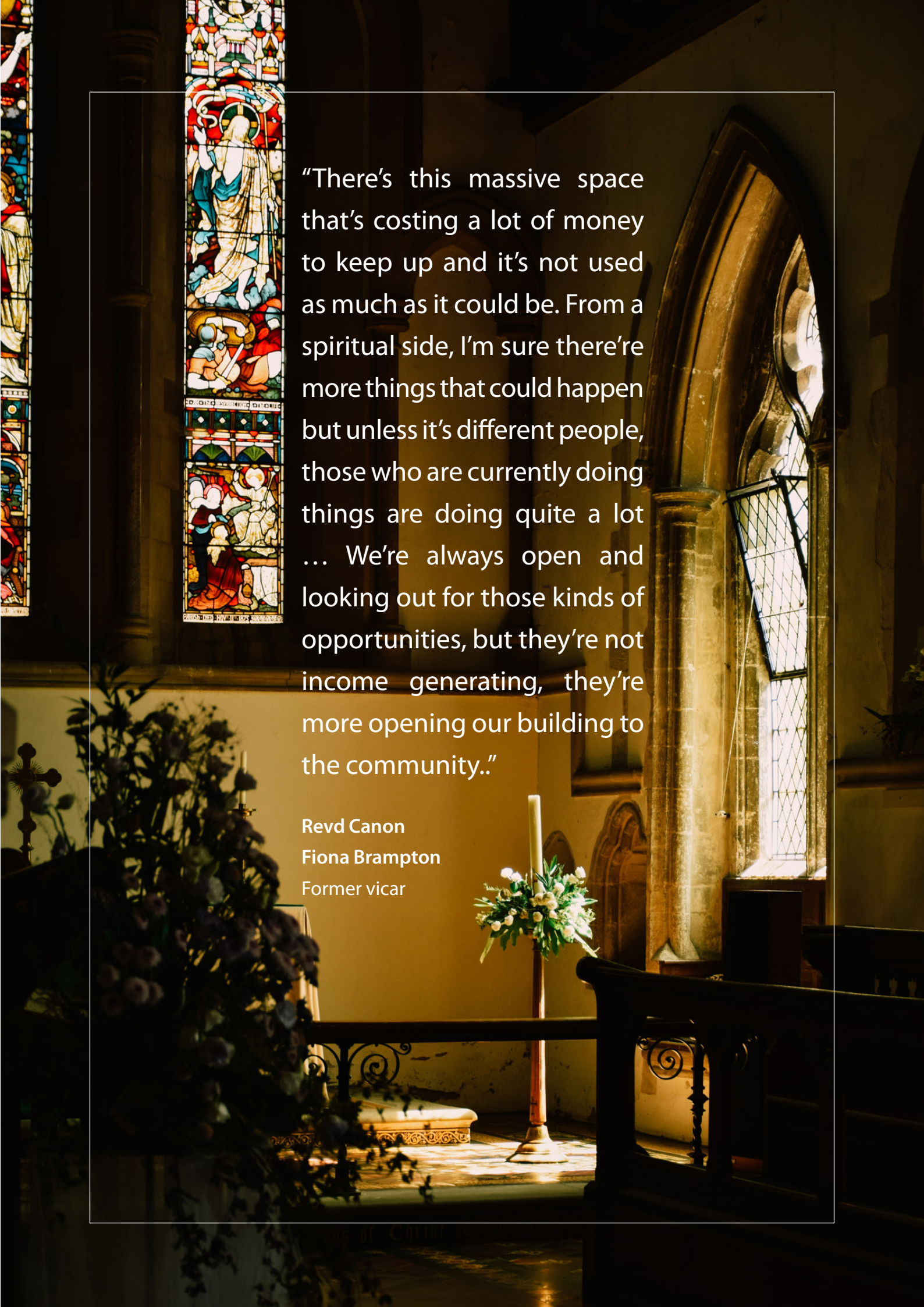
The church is rarely rented out as the two villages have many other suitable venues for hire. On occasions, funeral teas have been held in the church for a **small donation** and a dance group rehearse in the building and make a contribution to funds. The building is too cold to rent out in the winter months for exercise classes or children's groups. The church operates a **parish giving** scheme.

Tradecraft Sale. A soup lunch is available on a third Saturday of the month between 12 and 2 p.m. to anyone (*see Events*). The church is dedicated to Fairtrade and in addition to using those products such as tea and coffee, all Traidcraft products including crafted items and jewellery can be purchased through the church.

The Robert Arkenstall Educational Foundation is a charity established by the will of Robert Askenstall dated 1 April 1640 by which about 50 acres of land were left to the parish, the rents to be used to maintain a free school. One quarter of the net income is paid to the vicar of Haddenham for the promotion of religious instruction by means of, for example, a Sunday School.

Communications

Haddenham **Parish Council website** (serving the villages of Haddenham and Aldreth) includes information about amenities, Parish Council's agendas and meetings, and community events. On the **Facebook page** of Holy Trinity Haddenham, the church shares latest news and events. In August 2020, the church launched its first **YouTube channel** 'Holy Trinity Church Haddenham'. A **newsheet** with collects and readings is published in paper and can be found on the website. A **parish magazine** *The Village Voice* was started by the church but later taken over by the village. It features articles, announcements, and advertisements for local businesses. Ten issues are published per annum and the magazine is sold to residents (not on website). The team place **posters** on a church **noticeboard** to advertise services and events.



"There's this massive space that's costing a lot of money to keep up and it's not used as much as it could be. From a spiritual side, I'm sure there're more things that could happen but unless it's different people, those who are currently doing things are doing quite a lot ... We're always open and looking out for those kinds of opportunities, but they're not income generating, they're more opening our building to the community.."

Revd Canon
Fiona Brampton
Former vicar

REACH

Community

Caring for God's Acre. Holy Trinity church participates in this scheme which promotes the conservation of burial sites and churchyards in the UK, managing them for wildlife and heritage, as well as and supports the volunteers who look after and maintain them.

Hosting events and election hustings. The Church hosted an evening to hear about the work of the homeless shelter, Jimmy's in Cambridge. Both Holy Trinity and the Baptist Church have provided a space for hustings to be held for local or general elections, offering a public space where local people can listen to the various candidates.

Ely Foodbank. Holy Trinity acts as a distribution centre for the Ely Foodbank and this takes place on Mondays from 1 to 2 p.m. The meeting room is made available for any private conversations with the foodbank clients. Various denominations come together to provide this service which is led by volunteers who also help with packing bags of food for its clients.

Collection point. The Cambridge Convoy for Refugees used the church as a collection point for donations. Haddenham church was also a collection centre for the refugees in northern France. There was a tremendous response to the appeal for tents, sleeping bags and warm clothes and blankets.

Walk of Witness. On Good Friday, as part of their Eastertide observance, members of congregation meet together to participate in a public act of worship and a walk of witness through the village. Participants carry the heavy wooden cross and stop at various locations along the route to offer prayers and hymns.

“It’s a church that has lots of friends generally, people who really like the church and want to do things for the church, but it doesn’t have an official Friends group.”

Revd Canon Fiona Brampton

Former vicar

Events

Flower Festival. Holy Trinity’s largest fundraising event takes place in July. Admission is free, but there are stalls, displays of artwork, refreshments and a raffle.

Cream Teas are organised together with other churches in the Grunty Fen Churches group and held on Trinity Sunday. Events are advertised on Facebook.

Soup and More is held on the third Saturday of the month at Haddenham church. A soup lunch, coffee and cakes is available to anyone. The event also includes a skills exchange and various other activities.

Nativity Plays. These productions have been held for several years, organised by an external group with professional writers. Residents and ministers from the various churches were recruited to play leading roles in the plays.

Café Church for Everyone is an alternative form of worship. We gather around tables, have coffee and cake, and actively participate in different parts of the service.

Summer Barbeque. A well-attended barbeque is held at the church in the summer months and this attracts younger members of the congregation in particular.

Sleepovers. Both family and teenage sleepovers have been held at the church.

Village picnic/Pentecost event. A picnic is held for families on the recreation ground. This includes games and activities as well as worship.



Clockwise: The Reverend Canon Fiona Brampton giving a farewell service after nearly 20 years as vicar in Haddenham and Wilburton (Photo source: www.elystandard.co.uk); A handmade Nativity scene exhibited in Holy Trinity church (Photo by Haddenham church).

Engagement

Collaboration with local schools. Haddenham church has a close working relationship with the schools based in the parish, from primary to secondary age, and members of the church are governors at the local school.

Clubs for children and young people. The church organises **holiday clubs** and weekly **T Club** and **T Club Seniors** at the school – after-school clubs for Year 1-6 children and Year 7 upwards, respectively. They meet in the church or the vicarage if the church is too cold. Holy Trinity church is also the primary school's official evacuation point should the school need to close in an emergency.

Mothers' Union. This active group based in the church, offering support and help to families here and abroad, meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Integration into village activities. The PCC organises a harvest celebration on the recreation ground in the village. The vicar also regularly attends the Tuesday lunch club which meets in the village centre. Members of the church are involved with the local Guide and Brownie groups.

Christmas card. Holy Trinity joins with other churches in the village to send out an annual Christmas card to all residents.



Clockwise: Medieval font; Seating arrangement in the south transept; High Altar; Stained glass depicting the Nativity scene.

REFLECTIONS

Challenges

Church location

The church sits on a ridge slightly away from the centre of the village. This means that the church and extensive grounds are not used as much as they might be.

Income generation

The village has a number of buildings that offer rooms for hire that have better space and facilities for clubs and events, meaning that there is little demand for rentals at Holy Trinity. The Methodist church is more centrally placed and runs a café four mornings a week. In consideration of this, Holy Trinity have now stopped having coffee mornings which had previously contributed to funds. The congregation is small; although there is a parish giving scheme the income from this is limited.

Competing activities within the village

Holy Trinity has to take into account the other events and activities taking place in the village to avoid clashing with these. For example, the Methodist church runs a Messy Church and there is an annual village beer festival and bonfire. There are also exhibitions and workshops on offer at the Village Centre.

Asset management

The recent quinquennial report identified renovations amounting to £600,000. The church has not yet decided on how to raise the funds for this work but it will require a large injection of cash.

Youth engagement

The ministry team find it challenging to attract younger people in the village to attend regular Sunday services.

Church building condition

Holy Trinity is a large church and is difficult to heat. Storage heaters are used to alleviate the damp in the walls but are insufficient to heat the church in the winter months. The cold conditions are not conducive to using the church for exercise classes, for example.

Lack of volunteers

Although Haddenham church is well supported by its congregation and non-worshippers in terms of its current activities, the church has an ageing membership and there are insufficient volunteers to take on the work involved in additional events or activities.



Lessons Learned

To increase opportunities for further church and community integration

The churchyard provides a green space that is currently underused. The PCC are taking part in the Caring for God's Acre initiative and local artists come and paint in the churchyard but there is scope to allow for greater use of the space, particularly by children.

To plan carefully and ahead of major restoration and renovation works

The glass-walled meeting room has created a useful space for meetings and activities. However, in hindsight the room is rather too long, narrow, and the acoustics of the space creates an echo when a large group of people is present. In this sense, the meeting room is not used to its full potential. The PCC were perhaps over-cautious when it came to planning this addition to the building.

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

The removal of further pews means that there is room for alternative forms of service or large events.

To invite the community to use the church buildings for non-religious purposes

Haddenham church has provided venue for local hustings when other spaces in the village were not available.

To foster collaboration links with other churches

Holy Trinity joins with other Anglican churches in the parish for certain of its services. There is also collaboration between churches of all denominations in the village in the operation of the foodbank and other events and activities.

To be responsive to change

With the post-Covid-19 re-opening, the church sought creative ways of reaching out to congregation. On church's newly launched YouTube channel, future services will be streamed live and available on the YouTube channel for those who wish to join in from home. The church encourages everyone to leave comments to indicate if there are any suggestions or prayer requests.



“[The interregnum] is always a challenge and sometimes it does lead to a lot of growth not necessarily in numbers, but in the people themselves and what they feel able to do. And I think that’s the message we have to keep putting out.”

Revd Canon Fiona Brampton
Former vicar

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