

Statement of Need

The vestry at St Mary's Church, Pontyates, although of generous size, is currently under-utilised due to poor thermal performance, an inefficient high roof space, limited kitchen provision, and reliance on externally accessed toilet facilities. These constraints significantly restrict the vestry's use for hospitality, pastoral care and community engagement, particularly during colder months and for those with mobility needs.

There is an identified and growing need for a warm, accessible and properly equipped support space to enable regular Church Café opening and community food initiatives serving all age groups. Modernising the kitchen and improving insulation will allow the church to respond more effectively to its pastoral and missional calling, offering welcome, nourishment and fellowship within a safe and dignified environment. Providing internal access to toilet facilities is essential to support inclusive use of the building and to meet contemporary expectations of accessibility and safeguarding.

Statement of Impact

The proposed works will have a limited and carefully considered impact on the significance of the building. The vestry is a subsidiary space within the church, and the

alterations are designed to enhance its functionality while remaining proportionate and reversible where possible. Improvements to insulation and services will not affect historic fabric of significance, and the installation of a modern kitchen will be contained within the existing vestry footprint.

The formation of an internal route to the existing toilets, including the construction of a modest partition wall, will improve accessibility and safety without detracting from the character or legibility of the space. Overall, the proposals will secure the long-term, sustainable use of the vestry in support of the church's worship and community life, delivering clear public benefit that outweighs any minimal harm arising from the alterations.