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St Mary's Church
Churchyard
Hitchin
SG5 1HP
28 September 2023

Dear Emma,

ST MARY'S CHURCH, HITCHIN. -CHOIR AND CHANCEL LIGHTING

Thank you for your help processing the approvals for us to resolve the problems that we are having with the lighting particularly in the Chancel and around the Nave altar. As discussed I set out below the issues and what we are proposing:

Background

The lighting levels in the church are poor and many of the congregation have difficulty reading hymn books.

With the assistance of lighting specialist Miles Pinniger and specialist manufacturer iGuzzini, we are in the process of developing a plan to improve the lighting throughout the church. The aim is to achieve a lux level of about 200 at hymn book level. We have prepared some initial plans using candelabras in the aisles and the chapels; similar in layout to the existing but enhanced with LED strips at clearstorey level and further uplighters to improve the level of lighting in the Nave.

Using the general data on the particular lights and an assessment of the candelabras light bulbs, we still have not reached 200 lux in the Nave. We need actual data from the candelabras to insert the actual lumen output and the reflected light from the walls etc. in order to confirm the level of light in the Nave areas.

It is already evident that this re-lighting will require a re-wiring of the lighting throughout the church. This is a project that we are not ready to undertake until we have rebuilt the boiler house as a plant room.

In the relatively recent past, new flood lights we installed in the eaves of the Chancel area. These lights are not only the wrong colour (4,500k rather than 2,750k) but are not bright enough to provide the necessary lighting at hymn book level. We have looked at the lights necessary to produce 200 lux and they would resemble football stadium floodlights. The flood lights have already had to be replaced at a cost of about £1,500. We have therefore determined that the flood lights should be abandoned and more light provided at hymn book level.

Although the existing candles at choir stalls level look nice, they take a lot of maintenance and are not very flexible.

The area of the Nave altar is often used for orchestras and other performances. The people using the area often complain that the lighting in this area is not good enough, particularly by the pulpit and lectern, and they have had to bring in separate lights. This makes it hard for us to market the space and to bring more people into the church.

Similar complaints have been made about the use of both the pulpit and the lectern.

The candelabra throughout the church appear to be in the style of George Pace. There are two styles of candelabra in the church at the moment and neither of them produce enough light for the church. We need to find a way of increasing the light levels and this may mean replacing the George Pace lights. If this looks to be necessary, then we would contact the Borthwick collection in York and Historic England to ascertain whether the lights were designed by George Pace or not. Potentially we could store the fittings in the reduction chamber beneath the bells.

Proposals

1 Choir

- 1.1 To replace the choir candles with modern LED lights similar to those used at St George's in Windsor and many of the major churches across the country. The lightbulbs for the lights would be dimmable Osram E14 6.5 watt (60watt equivalent) warm white (2,750k)
- 1.2 The lights will be controlled and dimmed from a central point within the choir using wi-fi.
- 1.3 We are not in a position to re-wire the church at the moment and therefore the lights would be powered from the existing power supply feeding the defective flood lights in the chancel.

2 The crossing by the Nave Altar

- 2.1 Replace the two George Pace style candelabras with the two new candelabras. These candelabras are based on the candelabras designed by the quinquennial architect, Sherry Bates' candelabras used at Towersey. As St Mary's is much bigger the diameter of our candelabras is 1 metre.
- 2.2 The candelabras are lit with 8 Osram dimmable LED star E27 Globe frosted 11 watt (100 watt) Extra warm white bulbs.
- 2.3 The candelabra was lit and hung in the centre of the aisle, as suggested by Sherry Bates to demonstrate to the PCC the effect of the proposed lights. The PCC were delighted with the effect, the light levels in the aisle and even the increased light levels in the Nave.
- 2.4 Although we will be able to dim these two candelabras the power supply will be linked to the existing aisle lights and therefore will not be totally independent.
- 2.5 In summary the benefits of undertaking this trial are
 - 2.5.1 To be able to measure the actual light levels from this fitting rather than assessing the theoretical light levels. These levels will then enable the full design of the church lighting to be completed.
 - 2.5.2 Improve the level of light in the area of the pulpit, lectern and nave altar.
 - 2.5.3 Demonstrate to the whole congregation the effect of the proposed lights.

I also confirm that the electrical contractor we propose using for this work is Oliver Russell and that he has £10 million insurance cover.

The two candelabras have been manufactured by Paul Walker of Colin Walker and sons, 6 Hewitt Close, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. AL4 8TQ

If you have any queries on any of the above, then please get in contact with me

Kind regards

