

Disabled access toilet & coffee bar at Saint Alban's

by Matt King in Westcliff On Sea, England, United Kingdom

Can you spend a penny... or a few pounds?

We all need to use the loo from time to time don't we? And most of us like a good coffee or tea and a chat. At the moment this isn't practical at St Alban's church. Can you help us?

St Alban's Church in Westcliff-on-Sea has a regular congregation of around 50 people, many of whom have disabilities. We also open for Soft Play Church for young families and would like to use the church building for many other activities and events. Installing an accessible toilet and coffee bar at the back of the church will make this possible.

The Church is located in Milton Ward, Westcliff-on-Sea, and is currently part of the Parish of Southend. The Parish is one of the four most deprived parishes in the Diocese of Chelmsford.

At the moment we can only access dated toilet facilities through a labyrinthine route through the vestry, up stairs and through the halls. This has meant that some people cannot attend church due to the lack of accessible toilet facilities, and we have been unable to run events in the beautiful building, dating back to 1897.

The North Porch is currently only used to store the vacuum cleaner and cups. Our plan is to move the external locked door outwards, so that there is no longer an alcove, which is currently fenced off to prevent people using the porch for undesirable purposes. The internal area will be refurbished and an accessible toilet and sink will be installed. The corner that is currently used as a children's corner will have a new fully equipped coffee bar installed, enabling us to serve refreshments after church services and events. The children's corner will be moved to another area of the church.

Installing a new accessible toilet, including a changing table, will help us use the church building for lots more activities and help people be comfortable too!

The total cost of this project is £45,000. We have been awarded grants of £22,000 from Garfield Weston Foundation and Allchurches Trust. A generous member of the congregation has given £3,000 and we have been gifted £5,000 from a partner church. We are applying for further grants to the value of £5,000 from local grant making trusts. We are therefore crowdfunding for the remaining £10,000, which will pay for the installation of the toilet itself and all the associated works.

We are aiming to start the building works mid September and hope that it will be completely finished by Christmas 2020!

NB: If we raise more than we need for the project, extra money will be put into a St Alban's Church Repair and Improvement Fund to help with all of the other things that we need to do to improve the church building.