

# DARTMOUTH, ST CLEMENT

## Case study

from the Church Buildings Office  
March 2015

### SUMMARY OF WORKS

- Decayed pews and floors were removed and a new slate floor laid over underfloor heating.
- The Chancel was given a blue lias floor which curves out dramatically into the crossing.
- New quality wooden chairs allow total flexibility of use.
- The curved altar rails can be removed and stored on special hooks in the North transept.
- New disabled-friendly north inner porch, with adjacent oak kitchen and servery.
- Ringing chamber raised to balcony level to free up space for disabled toilet.
- South transept adapted as weekday chapel and for informal worship etc.
- Complete new lighting Installation with high-efficiency lights and provision for theatre lights etc.



Grade I listed  
Norman font, basically early C14  
with C15 or early C16 tower,  
restored 1881-5 by Ashworth

St Clement's stands high above the town, and is one of three churches in the community of 6000. The Parish contributes to the life of the town in any way it can; including making its buildings available for town events, such as Concerts and Craft Festivals, and those attached to the famous Dartmouth Music Festival, and the Port of Dartmouth Royal Regatta.

Various changes of level were eliminated so that the whole complex is wheelchair accessible, with just one step up to the altar. Running costs have been substantially reduced by more efficient heating and lighting, with better controls.

The driving factor in this scheme was the wish to make the whole church more attractive and inviting to worshippers, especially families with young children. In this it has been very successful and now hosts a whole variety of social activities. It is also far more adaptable for outside community events such as concerts, orchestra rehearsals, University of the Third Age, a Rock Club (all weekly) and Art exhibitions etc.

The building has been made more attractive and welcoming to the local community, with easier access for the disabled and has brought the congregation closer to the celebration of the liturgy and enabled greater participation in services. The existing

furniture within the church made the space inflexible and cramped, with poor sightlines and an unwelcoming atmosphere. The chosen nave seating was solid wooden chairs with sea-grass seats, in a colour to match the tower screen, new kitchen and chancel furniture.

The newly reordered building provides space for refreshment and relaxation, and can be used for concerts, meetings, exhibitions, crèches and many other activities. The result is a beautiful, prayerful church building, which is attractive and easily adaptable for other suitable uses.

The parish would like to install a better kitchen in time, particularly in view of the enthusiastic take-up of their community lunches.



The works were completed in 2009 and cost around £350,000

Architect: Paul Heighway