

# IDEFORD, ST MARY THE VIRGIN

## Case study

from the Church Buildings Office  
March 2015

DIOCESE  
OF EXETER



## SUMMARY OF WORKS

- Removal of all pews and pew platforms, and replacement with 'Luke Hughes' benches.
- New level Purbeck stone floor.
- Improved heating.



The interior of this small, simple church was regimented and unwelcoming due to dark stained pine Victorian pews. After much community consultation the priorities were identified as the need to provide a sense of welcome, comfort, flexibility, tradition of worship, appearance and the ability to kneel for prayer.

The reordering has achieved the intentions of the brief, the new movable seating allows a range of seating arrangements without any loss of dignity or sense of order. The aim was to provide an adaptable layout which would be appropriate for changing patterns of worship, varying sizes of congregation, music, drama, community and social events. The use of benches means that the flexible seating retains the visual order of the pews and the character of the interior is maintained and enhanced. The level floor and the Purbeck paving, which incorporated the existing ledger stones has been received with acclaim by users and visitors

Grade II listed  
C12 tympanum; late C15/early  
C16 tower and arcade; rest  
rebuilt by Wightwick &  
Damont 1850; chancel 1883  
Ashworth

alike. The Chancel has remained unaltered, and with the side altar in the north aisle being removed, the chancel is left as the sole focus. The church is now bright and welcoming and significantly acoustically improved.

The flexibility of the seating has been fully made use of, enabling such events as quilt exhibitions, village fayres, concerts including a local rock band, lunches and even a fashion show.

The church has also been the exhibition venue for three local artists during Devon Open Studios in 2012/13, and has been transformed into a bustling Christmas Market on two occasions.



The works were completed in 2010.

Architect: John Scott, Oliver West and John  
Scott Architects