

LCF Case Study

St John the Evangelist, Bexley

Full restoration of church clocks

Total project cost:
£12,500

Total LCF
contribution:
£10,000



Background

St John the Evangelist Church, Bexley was originally established as a subsidiary to the Bexley parish church of St Mary due to the growth of the local population. It was consecrated in 1882, and the tower and spire were added in 1890. It became a church in its own right in 1936.

The Church is Grade II listed and the clocks are a replica of the workings of Big Ben, having been installed in 1891 by Gillett and Company. The same company has been responsible for the clocks since that date.

The spire and clocks are a Historic Local Landmark in Bexley since 1881/1891 standing at 155 ft high and can be seen for miles around. The clocks are some 75 ft high and are visible to thousands in the vicinity, not to mention all those on public transport who pass by daily.

LCF project objectives

The clocks stopped working in 2018 and the project was a major community and church outreach project, which involved dismantling all main working parts and links to the four individual clock faces; washing down and cleaning all gears; checking and replacing any damaged bearings; inspecting hour tubes and minute arbors; reassembling all components; and oiling and restoring the clocks to full working order.

Project details and outcomes

St John the Evangelist Church is an historic building serving all the surrounding vicinity and is fully illuminated every evening to 2230 hours. The clocks had chimed on the hour for over 100 years and were a landmark which was greatly missed. Following the restoration project the clocks now chime on the hour again. The Church is available 24/7 and brings comfort to many.

The church hall, which is adjacent to the clock tower, is used by story and craft workshops, Guiding and Brownies units, Line Dancing Club, Slimming World, Mother and Toddler meetings, Yoga, Bexley Community Café, Silver Swans, party groups and Church celebratory events. All currently subject to Government guidance relating to COVID-19.

Angela Haymonds, Trust Secretary for Enover Community Trust says:

“St John the Evangelist Church in Bexley is well-loved by its local community, with its four clock faces providing a practical purpose, as well as being a thing of beauty. The Trustees were really thrilled that they were able to restore a mechanical masterpiece that was installed 130 years ago and put it back in place as good as new for many future generations to enjoy, and indeed, find useful on a daily basis.”



St John the Evangelist, Bexley, Kent

Further information: <http://www.stjohnsbexley.org/>

Background, history and images courtesy of Angela Haymond, Enover Community Trust