

A MAJOR RE-ORDERING MAY NOT BE NECESSARY

Before you start making firm decisions on what changes you are going to need to make, you need a clear idea of what new uses you are going to introduce into your building. You need to have found out and understood what the specific requirements of those new uses are going to be.

In respect of seeking permission and funding as well as gaining support, it is not going to be enough to say you need a toilet or a flexible space. You will need to be able to explain why and also explain why you want it to be located there.

Are you thinking of a specific additional use or are you seeking to create 'a flexible space'? It is important to think through specific uses both in the short-term and the long-term. Who will be your new users and most importantly when and how will they be using your building?

You will have established this as part of your discussions with your current users and the community. (See Chapters 1 and 2.)

Things to think about include:

- Do you need to physically divide up the space? Do you need to create separate spaces e.g. a sound-proofed room for regular meetings that would enable other groups to be using the church for different activities at the same time? Do you want to be able to create separate spaces and entrances for children? Are you going to be renting out a permanent space within your building? Or will different groups use the same space, but at different times? If so, will one group need to walk through another group's space? Will there still be a quiet space available at all times? Some uses may require privacy.
- Don't settle on obvious solutions - there might be better ones. Divisions can be created between the nave and chancel and aisles. You can even create a mezzanine floor, but dividing spaces with full-height screens or partitions can be hugely expensive and visually damaging. Will you be able to get back the full space for particular occasions e.g. Christmas, a large wedding or funeral? You can consider sliding partitions or it might be possible to 'divide' a space with clever use of flexible modern lighting and heating.
- Do you want seating that can be easily moved or cleared away and stored when you want to create an open space? This can be a very sensitive issue. A thorough case for removal of all or part of existing seating such as pews will have to be made and you will need to look at the building interior as a whole. You will also have to show that any replacement seating combines good design and quality materials with comfort, while maintaining sympathy with historic interiors. There is a very helpful section about seating on the ChurchCare website at www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Guidance_Notes/Seating.pdf

