

**14TH-16TH  
CENTURIES**

**THE  
CHANCEL**

**Cherish**  
the past  
**Embrace**  
the future

In earlier times, the chancel and sanctuary were areas **reserved for the clergy** and important people associated with the parish. There was probably a **rood screen** across the chancel arch, keeping ordinary folk (and their animals!) out.



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**18TH-19TH  
CENTURIES**

**Cherish**  
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**Before the organ** was purchased, worship was led by the **'Mottram Singers'** and a band comprising **trumpet, kettle drums and a bassoon**, all seated - not in the chancel, but up in the west **gallery** at the other end of the church.

In 1703, **Reginald Bretland** from Thorncliffe Hall in Hollingworth was buried in the **middle of the chancel** - a large stone inscribed 'RB' marks the spot.

By 1820, **Reginald's marble effigy** had been **moved to the rear left corner** of the chancel, then in 1895 he was **moved again** to his present place in the corner of the **Hollingworth chapel**.



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## 19TH CENTURY

**Cherish**  
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The band were **replaced by an organ** in about 1820. This, and the singers still occupied the west **gallery** until 1868 when the choir were at last given some **plain stalls** for seating here in the **chancel**.

The 1820 plan shows that there were **pews** in the chancel, but **not for the choir** or congregation members - for the **Bishop** and his officers.

The **choir stalls** now in the chancel were installed here in 1895, after considerable **argument** about the **obstruction caused by their size**. The faculty granting permission insisted they be no higher than **3ft 8in**, and mounted on **'moveable'** platforms!



**20TH  
CENTURY**

**Cherish**  
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The **canopied seats** either side of the chancel arch and the two either side of the altar, were **originally in the Staveley Chapel**, and were not moved here until 1935.

In the photograph, taken sometime in the **early 20th century**, you can see how the chancel looked **without the canopied seats** on either side.

You can also see a **prayer desk** in front of the **chancel step**, in the middle of the nave.

This desk is now located in the chancel just behind the pulpit steps. The desk on the other side was moved here from the Staveley Chapel with the canopied seats.



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# OUR PLANS FOR THE CHANCEL

**Cherish**  
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We propose to make better use of the chancel, **removing some or all** of the large **choir pews** and replacing them with **high quality, but moveable seating**.

This would give us a much more flexible space for the choir or music group, with the singers facing forwards instead of sideways, making for a much improved sound.

This would be of great benefit to worshippers, also visitors who come for concerts and other performances.

It would be particularly good for All Age services, our Nativity and Christingle services, and especially for School events, where the chancel regularly needs to accommodate a large number of children.

The space could also be used for smaller services of up to 30 people. The seating could be placed facing either way - to the nave, to the east window, or inwards as now. In particular, the 8.30am service would be held here - the Staveley chapel is often too small to accommodate the numbers that attend.

On other occasions, the chancel could be turned into an atmospheric space for prayer, meditation or other group activities, with chairs placed in a circle.

*continued*



# OUR PLANS FOR THE CHANCEL

**Cherish**  
the past  
**Embrace**  
the future

*continued*

We propose to **extend the chancel** floor forwards with a **solid wooden dais** (platform), giving a **better angle of vision** to our service leaders - they would be able to see more of the congregation (**particularly in the side aisles**) and vice-versa.

A **ramp** would be built to the right hand side of the dais, giving **access to the chancel**. We would need to move the eagle lectern to make way for the ramp, but we have not yet decided on its exact position.

**This would be of great benefit to disabled and elderly visitors, many of whom cannot manage to climb the step - also wheelchair users and families with buggies. This will make the space more accessible and inclusive.**

A **new moveable communion table** would be commissioned for the dais, although we would **retain the existing high table** in the sanctuary for special services, for instance Christmas and Easter.

**We want to keep the high table, as a valued part of the history and tradition of the building and the congregation.**

*continued*



# OUR PLANS FOR THE CHANCEL

**Cherish**  
the past  
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the future

*continued*

**Two pews** would be **removed from the front of the church**, to make room for the new dais but no others would be removed from the large central seating block in the nave.

You can see from the **area marked with yellow tape**, how much space this will create, making a **space for people to circulate** in front of the dais, into both side aisles, without any change in floor level.

**Making a clear passage across the front will improve access for congregation and visitors, especially those who are elderly or disabled, wheelchair users or families with pushchairs.**

**We'd love to know what you think:**



~ Fill in a paper or on-line **questionnaire** ~ Pop a disk into one of the **voting boxes** ~ Leave a **post-it** comment on one of the white boards ~

[mottramparish.org.uk/heritage/bigplan](http://mottramparish.org.uk/heritage/bigplan)



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