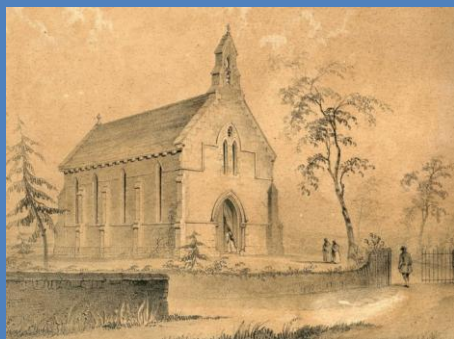


NEWMAN MEETING PLACE

The Community Space at Littlemore Church

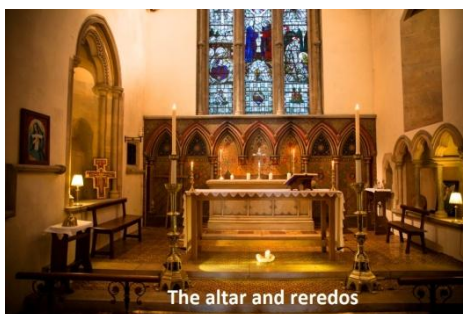


www.newmanmeetingplace.org.uk
www.johnhenrynewman.org

Project aim: To renew the vision of John Henry Newman and turn the church he built in Littlemore into a spiritual, cultural and social meeting place serving the 21st century needs of this diverse community.

The **Newman Meeting Place Project** aims to restore and renew the famous church built by John Henry Newman in Littlemore. Alongside historic preservation work, the project is installing essential up-to-date amenities, such as toilets and running water, as well as creating new internal spaces for meetings and celebrating Newman's extraordinary life and legacy. Visitors and pilgrims will benefit from a special heritage area. Flexible seating will enable the church to be used in new ways, for exhibitions, music concerts, lectures and a range of local activities and ecumenical events.

Renewing Newman's church in this way continues his compassionate vision of helping and serving the community of Littlemore, which remains one of the poorest parts of Oxford.



As was the case in 1835-6, when Newman used his celebrity and connections to raise the funds needed to build the church, so too this project is seeking help from people who continue to be drawn to Newman and his abiding Christian example. Our project prayer has been inspired by Newman's poem 'Lead kindly light', written while he was the priest in charge at Littlemore:

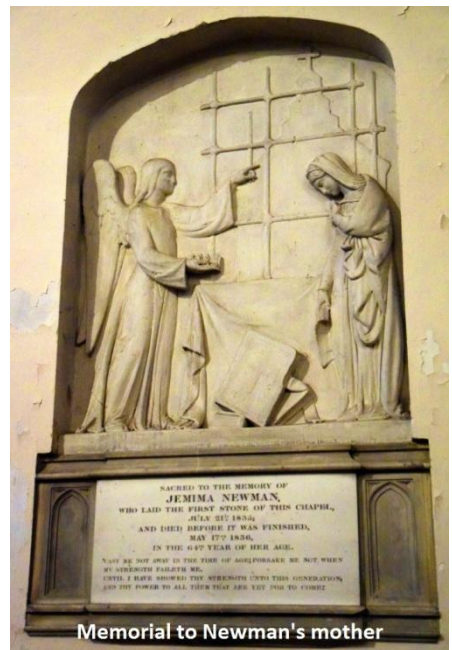
"Generous God, lead us with your kindly light along the path of faith and trust as we pray for your help and resources to complete our building project. Amen".

HERITAGE AND ARCHITECTURE

The Anglican church of St Mary and St Nicholas in Littlemore is one of John Henry Newman's most significant legacies and a building of international importance. Built to Newman's own design in 1836, with 'Catholic' features that shocked many Anglicans, its layout has served as a model for small elegant places of worship throughout the world. His struggle to get it built, in an impoverished rural hamlet, provides a powerful insight into Newman's compassion for the poor and his sense of Christian mission.

Newman told his parishioners to view the architecture of Littlemore Church as 'a holy book, which you may look at and read, and which will suggest to you many good thoughts of God and heaven'. With its seven-arched reredos, tall lancet windows and many other symbolic features the church is a striking monument to Newman's own religious journey towards Rome.

This iconic building is now in urgent need of repair. Many of Newman's original features, untouched for 180 years, require careful preservation and restoration. These include the marble monument to Newman's mother, carved in a similar style to the annunciation, and the original donor board, commemorating all those who helped to finance the building. As well as listing many famous Oxford figures, Newman tellingly included the 'children of the parish' for the few pence they had contributed.



COMMUNITY SPACE

Complementing the heritage work, the project will create a new community space in a truly inspirational building right at the heart of Littlemore. Our aim as a parish church is expressed in our vision statement: *‘To be an inclusive seven-day church that embodies the love of God in the community’*. Open all week, it will offer much-needed facilities and support for local groups. The issues facing Littlemore include:

- 30% of children living in poverty
- Parts of Littlemore are among the 20% most deprived parts of England
- 40% of the population aged over 60 are considered to be income deprived and one of the four wards of Littlemore has the highest loneliness indicator for the over 65s
- 36% of households are headed by a lone parent
- 26% of working adults have no qualifications

Working together with mental health agencies, local schools, the village hall and an Oxford befriending service, we will be running targeted sessions in our new meeting spaces, often involving music and the arts. There will be dedicated areas for silent prayer.

We will also be providing a community café. This seven-day church will become a centre where, in Newman’s words, ‘Heart speaks to heart’.



There is no other space for that in Littlemore. Reflecting this, our parish prayer asks:

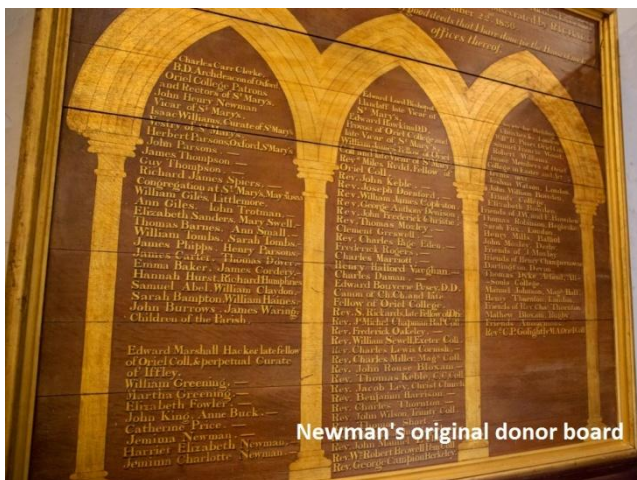
“Loving Lord, may your shining light fill the hearts of all who live, work and worship here in Littlemore. Amen”.

ECUMENICAL CENTRE

The project's heritage centre, located near the church entrance, will be assembled with Catholic and Anglican input. Celebrating Newman's life with panels and exhibits, it will serve visitors and pilgrims from both denominations, creating a dedicated space for promoting the 'Uniting of Friends' (to invert Newman's words).

Successful interdenominational services have already been held in our church during Lent and Advent. Building on these, and making use of the new flexible nave space, we will be holding additional ecumenical services and multi-faith events on a much more regular basis.

There will also be a new series of Newman inspired talks and heritage events, planned in association with our Catholic partners at 'The College' in Littlemore and the Oxford and Birmingham Oratories, as well as Anglican institutions



linked to Newman, such as Oriel College and the University Church. One of the most recent groups we have worked with is the international Catholic media TV channel Shalom.

We aim to actively collaborate with many more organisations inspired by Newman and to make full use of this unique Anglo-Catholic space to promote Christian unity, providing an uplifting experience for visitors and pilgrims from all over the world.

BUILDING CHANGES

The project has obtained planning permission for the following major improvements and additions to the church interior. These will ensure the building is welcoming, adaptable, fit for purpose and an accessible, people-friendly space for all. However, you won't be able to see any changes from the outside, as we want to preserve its historic beauty. The changes will all be on the inside.

By the entrance (West End) there will be:

- A raised balcony for the organ and musicians (see below)
- An accessible toilet
- A dedicated heritage and exhibition area
- A well-equipped kitchen
- Storage facilities

Throughout the church:

- Redecorate all areas
- New electrical system
- New heating system
- New stone floor
- New lighting & audio visual equipment
- Restoration of reredos
- Flexible nave seating that can be reconfigured as needed



Tower Room (currently two vestry areas):

- The creation of one large meeting room by merging two existing vestry areas
- Refurbishment of first floor tower room
- A toilet and small kitchen area

FINANCIAL PLANS

The costs of the project are as follows:

Phase 1: Tower construction works:	£189,471
Phase 2: Nave construction works:	£432,700
Phase 3: Conservation and heritage	£114,702
Total	£736,873

To date, £375,809 has been raised towards the Newman Meeting Place Project. This represents 51% of the £736,873 needed to complete the entire programme of works, for which planning permission was granted in 2017. £73,664 has been raised through local fundraising and the rest has been received from charitable foundations and trusts.

A total of £51,457 has been spent, mainly on planning and architect's fees. Full details of finances (fundraising, lists of trusts, expenses) are available.



DETAILS OF WORK AND PROGRESS

Work on the tower area started on 23rd September 2019. We are hoping to raise the rest of the funds for phases 2 and 3 by the end of 2019 so that the building work can continue straight after the completion of phase 1.

1. Tower (£189,471)

The tower was added to Newman's church at the same time as the Chancel in 1848, three years after Newman left Littlemore. It was funded by his close friend Charles Crawley, who had made his fortune in the guano trade. Crucially, the plans eventually agreed with the architect Joseph Clarke placed the Tower at the north east end of the church, leaving the road view of Newman's original building (now the nave) and its dimensions unchanged. Newman saw Clarke's plans and approved them.

Works to the tower include the installation of a small toilet and a proper kitchen facility, the re-levelling and merging of two vestry rooms (with structural support) to create a single space for group meetings and the Sunday school, refurbishment of the first floor tower room, and the installation of mains services (water, sewage, gas, 3 phase electrical upgrade) through the churchyard. The work is scheduled to take 3 months. Crucially it will not affect the operation of the rest of the building.



Existing makeshift kitchen

2. Nave (£432,700)

The nave is the original church as built by Newman in 1836. The main structure - roof, walls, window openings, flooring - are unchanged since Newman's time, with one exception. In 1848 a Chancel was added at the east end, paid for by Charles Crawley. Newman's original east end wall, comprising three tall lancet windows set above a seven-arched reredos, was taken down and reinstated at the east end of this new chancel. The nave's other original features include a 13th century stone font discovered and installed by Newman, his eagle lectern, the commemorative marble to his mother, and the original donors' board.

The work in the nave is all internal and does not affect the building's external appearance. It makes no changes to the original stone walls, windows or roof. Its main element is the construction of a panelled wooden gallery over the west entrance (see over), an idea once mooted by Newman himself.

Underneath this new gallery, a disabled toilet with a baby changing facility, a storage area and an adaptable kitchen / serving area will be installed. The organ will be dismantled and relocated on the gallery, which will also have room for musicians and a choir. The famous Newman donor board will also move to the gallery. The other main nave works include:

- Removal of all the pews and flooring materials
- Installation of a new stone floor
- Relocation of the 13th century stone font further into the nave
- Installation of services (3 phase electrical, water and sewage)
- Repair of walls
- Internal redecoration of whole nave and chancel
- Complete electrical rewire, new lighting system and an a/v system
- Installation of central heating system by Dunphy Heating

3. Conservation and heritage (£114,702)

These works cover conservation of historic fabrics, essential improvements to drainage and access, and the creation and curation of the project's heritage facilities.



External (paths, ramps, drainage above and below ground)	£26,402
Newman Project Heritage Centre	£25,000
Non-reclaimable VAT	£13,300
Relocation / retuning of 1882 G. M. Holdich organ	£15,000
Restoration of reredos by Chroma Conservation	£11,000
Restoration / electrification of clock and bell	£7,000
Repairs and cleaning of stained glass (including windows by Thomas Willement, William Morris & Co., Shrigley & Hunt, and Louis Davis, who was described by Nikolaus Pevsner as 'the last of the pre-Raphaelites')	£5,000
Repairs to rood screen, pulpit canopy and font cover	£3,500
Restoration of marble memorial to Newman's mother	£2,000
Repairs to stone steps & restoration of floor tiles in Chancel	£2,000
Cleaning / reinforcement of Oberammergau figures	£2,000
Repairs to carving / fixing leaks in 13 th century stone font	£1,500
Relocation and conservation of original donor board	£1,000
Total:	£114,702

The Newman Project Heritage Centre will incorporate:

- ‘History and faith’ panels about Newman, co-authored with the Birmingham Oratory (Fr Guy Nicholls) and other Catholic partners
- Display cases for Newman related memorabilia (pictures, letters, original plans of church)
- AV presentations (short films) for adults and children
- Audio tour guide (multi-lingual) for pilgrims and visitors
- Literature stands: books, leaflets, postcards
- ‘Newman and Littlemore’ publications, including a new church guide
- Educational materials and learning trails for children
- A contemporary donor board recording project supporters
- Overhaul / maintenance of websites and social media platforms
- Three annual lectures organised in conjunction with external Newman organisations



*Watercolour of Littlemore church (1845)
and the Richard Westmacott bust of J. H. Newman (1841)*



For more information, including a
project film and details about donations,
please visit our websites:

www.newmanmeetingplace.org.uk

www.johnhenrynewman.org

If you would like to visit we would be delighted to show you around.

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