

PLANNING APPLICATION PL/2026/02830

Ref: SJB - 4

HERITAGE STATEMENT

St John the Baptist is a Grade 1 listed church located at the east end of the village of Bishopstone in the Chalke Valley, which runs from Berwick St John to the Avon valley south of Salisbury. The valley is described as being one of the most beautiful and unspoilt in Wiltshire, lying in a fold of the chalk downs at the northern edge of Cranbourne Chase. It is part of the Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape, which means it is an area protected for the nation.

Historic England's official list of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest, describe it as "an important and large village church". Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, describe it as "a near perfect example of a building from the 14th century". It is a beautiful ancient church within a beautiful rural setting. Further details of the church are provided at Annex A and are available on the Bishopstone Village website www.bishopstone-salisbury.co.uk.

Impact of the proposed works.

As indicated in the Design and Access Statement, there is an existing wooden shed in the churchyard of St John the Baptist that has been there for many years. This shed is partially hidden from view between and beneath two large Yew trees and a very large Beech tree. The proposal is to replace that shed with a new one in exactly the same position and of similar design and materials. The new shed will be slightly smaller than the one it replaces.

There is no other appropriate location for the shed because of the presence of graves elsewhere in the churchyard. As will be seen from the photographs, the site of the shed is, to a large degree, hidden by adjacent trees. The proposed replacement shed will therefore not have any adverse impact on the church, on its setting nor on the churchyard. In practical and social terms the impact will be positive. The floor of the old shed is rotten, and if it is not replaced soon, it will have to be closed for health and safety reasons. A new shed will at least provide a basic toilet facility, for people who attend services or other functions in the church. It has always been particularly welcomed by people who have come some distance to attend a funeral or wedding.

However, the need for better facilities is recognised, and it is hoped to achieve this once we have the financial ability to do so. The shed will then be used for much needed storage space of objects such as spare chairs, flower stands etc.

Sarah Seal

Church Warden



West end of church – the existing/ proposed shed site is behind the trees on the left.



View from the churchyard to north of church. Existing/proposed shed beneath the trees.

Annex A

Bishopstone church is a fine example of 14th century architecture. The church was built between the 13th and the 15th centuries, mainly of Chilmark stone, the same stone that was used for Salisbury Cathedral. It is cruciform in shape, with a nave, chancel and north and south transepts. A short tower rises from the middle. The chancel and transepts are of the finest work of their period and there are very few churches in Wiltshire built at this time.

The chancel has very fine 14th century stone vaulting in the roof with mediaeval bosses and corbels. To the East of the high Altar is a triple Sedilia, each seat has its own mini vault. The stained- glass east window is a fine example of the work of Frank W Mann, and is dedicated to the Montgomery family and the Earl and Countess of Pembroke. It is dated 1836. The Priest's door on the South side of the chancel has a unique rib-vaulted porch.

The South Transept, also has fine 14th century stone vaulting.

At the southern end is the fine ornately carved tomb of the Rev Augustus Montgomery, who died in 1843. This was designed by his friend, Augustus Pugin in the 14th century decorated style. On the wall outside the South Transept, is another very unusual feature which looks like another tomb under a canopied shelter. Experts are unsure of its purpose but it may have been an Almonry, or a resting place for coffins.

The North Transept is known as the Farmer's Aisle, because the farmers paying tithes to the church used to sit here. At the north end is the Founders tomb, possibly from the 14th century, which extends across the length of the end wall.

The stained- glass window in the North Transept is in poor condition because it was underfired. The paint is now water soluble, and much of the detail has been lost.

There are a number of memorials on the wall, the most important of which are the coat of arms belonging to the Vaughan family who lived in Faulstone Manor. The other is a large stone and marble monument to the Rev Abraham Conham, rector from 1584 to 1612.

The roof of the transept is currently undergoing extensive repairs, following the discovery in 2024 that the rafters holding up the roof were failing. This has been made possible by very generous grants from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, and Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust.

Contents of the Church

The two manual organ, built in about 1843 is placed in the South Transept, having been moved from the back of the nave around 1850. The original builder is unknown, but it was remodelled in 1897 by Peter Conacher. It underwent an extensive restoration in 2025

In 1838, the Rev Augustus Montgomery brought back a carved lectern, some finely carved pews, and some panelling, from Spain. The pulpit in the Nave, was made from some of these panels, and the carving on the front panel, depicting the Garden of Gethsemane, is particularly fine. Other panels were used to form the reredos behind the High Altar.

The font is C19 as per Historic England listing. The wooden cover is Victorian. The moveable nave altar is modern, and made of oak. It has five Consecration Crosses made from olive wood sourced from Bethlehem.