



ST PETERS CHURCH, BOURNEMOUTH

G. E. Street, R.A.  
Arch.

## St Peters Church Development Project

Discussion and planning continues to take place on proposals to restore and improve the Town's Grade 1 listed Civic Church of St Peter's in the Town Centre. This magnificent architectural creation designed by GE Street, the eminent Victorian architect famed for the works including the Law Courts in London, was admired by Sir John Betjeman, the late Poet Laureate and champion of all things English and quirky, who was also founding President of Bournemouth Civic Society.

Work is afoot by a team of volunteers to ensure the continued good future of St Peter's Church. After a series of working group meetings held last year and again this year, a Project Development Group has been appointed comprising of The Rev Dr Ian Terry (Team Rector), Brenda Dickerson (Church Warden), George Meyrick (Patron), Alan Frost (Former High Sheriff) and Ken Mantock (Civic Society Chairman). Trustee meetings are also attended by Virginia Beck (Church Warden) and Cllr John Beesley (Member of the congregation).

They are supported by a wide group of interested and engaged fellow partners including the Friends of St Peters whose Chairman, the current Mayor of Bournemouth; Cllr Chris Mayne, recently hosted a dinner at the Mayor's parlour to garner support for the initiative.

St Peter's is a hugely important landmark and cultural beacon. It contains nationally important features, fittings and examples of Victorian high art and designs including the wall paintings and organ however it requires several million pounds worth of renovation works. These works include renovations to the building fabric such as the stonework, clerestory windows and the organ which requires a complete overhaul. Improvements are needed for the heating, lighting and audio systems. The café needs bringing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the grounds which include the Resurrection Chapel (designed also by another of John Betjeman's favourite architects, Sir Ninian Comper as a memorial to those who fell in the First World War) require improvement and opening up to greater public access and use.

Vital to the ever growing relevance and development of St Peter's is its links into the wider Bournemouth community and the fostering of partnerships with organisations such as Bournemouth University, Arts University Bournemouth, Bournemouth & Poole College and Bournemouth Council. All have been involved in helping deliver more public art, concerts, and events with a better and greater visitor experience during 2014.

Such partnerships are vital to securing a sustainable future for St Peter's to achieve success in a Heritage Lottery Bid (HLF) with a wider fundraising appeal that will support the development project. These would not only see this gem of a building secured for another one hundred years, but its place at the heart of Bournemouth will be expanded as a hub for literary and music excellence.

News on the appeal launch, ways you can support the HLF bid and how you can get involved in the project will follow but if you have any ideas, suggestions, or wish to make a donation to the St Peters Development Project Fund contact Ken Mantock on [kjmantock@aol.com](mailto:kjmantock@aol.com) .

