Newton’s inspiration to understand the works of God
Contents

Introduction

1.1 Overview and Definitions
1.2 Project aims - Why do we need an Interpretation Plan?

2. Site and Collection - What is the content and context?

2.1 Summary
2.2 The building
2.3 The collections
2.4 Condition and conservation issues
2.5 Design Constraints

3. The Audience - Who is it for?

3.1 Visitor profile
3.2 Audit of interpretation

4. The Proposals - How will we communicate?

4.1 Overview and vision - general principle and desired impact
4.2 What is our story/subject? Spirit of Place. Themes and sub themes.
4.3 Where is our story to be told?
4.4 How will we tell the story? The visitor journey and wider engagement

5. Appendices (to follow in later draft)

5.1 Indicative budget
5.2 Illustrative plans
5.3 Delivery schedule

13.12.18
1. Overview and Definitions

‘Interpretation is revelation based upon information.’
Freeman Tilden 1957

An interpretation plan ensures that exhibits are relevant and accessible for target audiences and provides a framework for planning, decision making, and funding applications. Consultation during the development of the Plan will ensure an integrated approach between the architectural plans and activity plans as well as a shared ownership with partners and stakeholders. The Plan should also establish a common understanding of the site’s mission.

1.2 Project Aims - Why do we need an Interpretation Plan?

The following objectives were identified in the Mission Statement and initial consultation:

— Increasing visitor numbers and improved engagement with the site. Leading to long term sustainability
— People enjoy and are inspired by their visit - a powerful experience that engages, provokes and stimulates discussion
— Increased use by learning groups - A site providing powerful learning experiences working with academia and the arts to continue Newton’s spirit of curiosity.
— Satisfactory alternative provision is made for people whose access to the site is limited by its physical nature
— Contribution to the local community by providing a flexible event and activity space - a thriving community resource that reaches a wide spectrum of local people encouraging learning, reflection and cohesion
— Greater links with other local attractions (particularly Woolsthorpe Manor) and sites of learning

**Impact.** People connecting with the Newton Learning Centre and its work will find:

• their curiosity is stimulated
• they appreciate the significance of the site
• they are able to connect what they learn to their own lives
• they feel that science and faith are relevant to their lives
• they come away feeling inspired to further their experience
• they want to come back and to share their experience with others.

13.12.18
2. The Site and Collections - **What** is the content and context?

2.1 Summary

The significance of the site is elevated by the strong links to Sir Isaac Newton. He is perhaps the most important figure in the history of science and his recognition is global. He had a life-long interest in the St John’s, Colsterworth. It was where his family were buried and where he spent many hours in worship and contemplation. The church’s connection to the Priory, the presence of the fragmented Saxon cross suggest early use as a religious site, potentially linked to the importance of Colsterworth geographically as the junction point of the Ermine Street and Great North Road. The church’s unusual sloping floor, possible acoustic jars and rich Medieval graffiti all raise its curiosity value. The site’s role in community spans 1000 years and consultation has shown locals to have a strong attachment to it and commitment to its future.

2.2 The building

Listing details from Historic England (with my emphasis):

‘COLSTERWORTH HIGH STREET SK 9224-9324 (west side) 11/13 Church of St. John the Baptist 20.9.66 G.V. I Parish church. C11, mid and late C12, C13, 1305, C14, C15, 1809, 1876 chancel rebuilt by James Fowler of Louth. Ashlar, squared limestone rubble, lead and slate roofs. Western tower, nave plus clerestory, aisles, south porch, chancel, north organ chamber and vestry. The 3 stage ashlar tower of 1305, has wide clasping stepped buttresses, deep chamfered and bell moulded plinth, chamfered string course, battlemented parapet with human head corbel table, panelled and crocketed corner pinnacles, ogee headed and pinnacled rounded central merlon, angle grotesque corbels. On the south side the west buttress plinth bears a worn inscription recording the building of the tower in 1305 by Thomas Somerby. To each face the belfry has 2 light louvred openings with cusped heads, quatrefoils over and hood moulds with animal or human head stops. On the south side above the belfry light an early C19 clock face, to second stage a narrow pointed blocked light, the stone beneath the window inscribed with a face, and above a narrow ogee headed light with plain hood mould. The 2 light west window, recut C19, has Y tracery and hood mould with debased animal head stops. To either side are incised geometric consecration crosses. The north side has consecration cross, incised face and ogee headed light. The squared limestone rubble and lead roofed north aisle has C15 3 light west window with panel tracery and hood mould with beast head label stops. The C13 north doorway in pointed moulded surround with annular angle shafts has hood mould with human head stops. To the west a 2 light pointed window with C19 tracery and to the east a large flat headed 3 light window with moulded surround, C19 tracery and hood. The C15 ashlar clerestory has moulded parapet, 3 two light windows with trefoil heads to the lights in round headed openings with hood moulds. The C19 vestry has pointed doorway flanked by single 2 light openings and a 3 light eastern window. The 1876 chancel, built to commemorate Sir Isaac Newton, has slate roofs and a 3 light eastern window with beneath a coat of arms set in a quatrefoil. On the south side are 4 lancets. The coursed limestone rubble south aisle has late C14 east window with 3 ogee headed lights, 4 centred head and hood mould. To the east of the porch a 3 light C14 window and to the west one of 2 lights, both with flat heads and ogee heads to the lights. The west window is of 2 lights with Y trac-
ery. The 1809 south porch has double chamfered outer door with side benches. The C15 inner doorway has single chamfered 4 centred head and hood mould with possibly earlier niche over. The clerestory is as the north with the addition of an ashlar sundial. Interior. The north aisle arcade is of 3 bays, the stonework above the easternmost 2 bays is herringbone work, terminating against a line of quoins above a square pier, possibly indicating the extent of the original C11 church. The 2 bays have semi-circular headed square cut arches, the easternmost one has lightly incised zigzag decoration, supported on central squat drum pillar with scalloped capital. The later C12 westernmost bay has square cut round arch with hood mould, half round responds with crocketed imposts. The C14 south nave arcade has quatrefoil filleted piers with annular capitals, octagonal responds, double chamfered arches with hood moulds and human head label stops. The early C14 tower arch has 4 chamfers and hood mould with double octagonal responds and annular capitals. Above the arch the earlier nave roof pitch can be seen. The wide C14 chancel arch has double chamfered arch, octagonal responds, C19 hood mould. In the north aisle wall the opening to the rood loft stair survives and an aumbry. At the east end of the north aisle a C19 archway leads to the organ chamber. The chancel 2 bay north arcade is C19 in C13 style and the rear of the south wall lancets have angle shafts. The nave roof has moulded principals and cambered tie beams with large timber corbels. Fittings. All fittings are C19 including the mosaic and reredos, except for C17 chest in south aisle. In the organ chamber a quatrefoil plaque inscribed ET 1806, bearing Newton's Arms, and an inscription in memory of Sir Isaac Newton of this Parish and on the north wall a plaque in marble with limestone sundial inset, records that Newton aged 9 years cut with his penknife this dial, the stone given by C. Turnor, Esq. The octagonal font has part C15 stem with panels in part bearing pointed arches containing sacred symbols and floriate designs, and also C12 billet moulded blank arcading the panels filled with fleurons and trefoils. The C19 bowl repeats this theme. 2 fragments of Anglo Saxon Cross shafts, one by the chancel arch bears interlace patterns to all faces.

Most significant in view of creating a learning centre inspired by the site’s associations with Isaac Newton are the Newton Chapel, (currently the Vestry and dominated by the church organ), the Manorial entrance to the North (or Newton) Aisle, the graffiti on window cills in the North Aisle, the bell tower and bells used by Newton in his experiments to measure time and the possible acoustic jars which may have inspired his interest in sound waves. The project will include scientific investigations into several aspects of the building which may or may not raise their significance. These include:

- Establishing the use and potential influence on Newton’s work of the acoustic jars in the Nave (Rob Godman, University of Hertfordshire)
- Investigation of any remains beneath the Newton Chapel floor to identify the resting place of any of Newton’s relatives (Prof. King, University of Leicester)
- Study of graffiti to establish if any might be the work of Newton (Brian Porter, Lincs Archaeology Group)
- Study of graffiti of church at Woolsthorpe Manor to establish if it has any links to St John’s.
- Study of the sundials at the church to establish their significance and Newton’s level of understanding (British Horological Institute)
- Research into the archive to establish how the 17th Century interior appeared and what type of service was delivered (documentary research and comparative study).
- Study into the maker of the silverware to confirm any link to Newton (volunteer led)
- Architectural study of the building (including fragments and archaeology) to reveal more about its development (James Edgar).
2.3 The collections

There is a small collection of material which relates to the life of Sir Isaac Newton. The baptism register recording his birth and baptism in the church is enormously significant and provides the opportunity to introduce the events surrounding his birth and childhood. The font where Isaac Newton was baptised had the top section replaced in the 1876 re-ordering. If the practice of bury the original broken font bowl was observed then moving the font and lifting the floor may well reveal this and enable it to be displayed. A copy of Edmund Turnor's *Collections for the History of the Town and Soke of Grantham* detailing the history and artefacts in the area is another rich source.

The silver dated 1667 and 1679 has a strong likelihood of being gifts from Isaac Newton to commemorate his mother's death and burial and his return from Cambridge during the plague. Further research into the London based silversmith might strengthen the link to Newton.

Fragments of the building and monuments have been preserved by church wardens. These need to be studied and understood fully, but have great potential to illuminate and illustrate the development of the building and its links to previous structures such as the Priory. Excavation under the Newton Chapel during the main project may reveal archaeological evidence of family burials.
2.4 Condition and conservation issues

Significant limitations are present at the Church due to its age and construction methods and materials. Increasing number of visitors will inevitably bring about wear on the fabric of the building. This requires thoughtful design solutions in the visitor experience to minimise the impact. This will need to be mitigated by display approaches and practical management of the visit. The mix and nature of the collection with different environmental and security requirements will influence display and interpretation approaches. This is likely to include sensitively designed cabinets to create microclimates and enable the display of sensitive material and indeed loan objects from other organisations.

2.5 Design Constraints

The project should enhance the integrity and improve the protection of the building. The key limitation for the design brief is put simply as: complex space, big story. The strength of the Church is the intimate atmosphere and continuing function as a place of worship. The impact this creates could be lost with heavy handed interpretation. The re-establishment of the Newton Chapel will enable the existing function to be retained whilst providing a separate space to fully and comfortably explore stories and items seen within the Church.

Similarly, the strength is also a weakness as the fixed nature of the site reduces the potential for flexibility and refreshing the visitor experience. The depth of knowledge we have of each object and feature is likely to increase over time. One has to be clear about the overall significance of the site and the community to which it belongs in order not to get lost in the detail or to become fixed in an entirely backward facing approach. There is also a danger of becoming a museum of more general social history. This plan aims to use Sir Isaac Newton's relationship with the church primarily to reveal aspects of his character and a Colsterworth which visitors will be able to see reflections of today. Further themes relating to aspects of local history will be present, but presented as different strands of the interpretation.

Access to some of the key features is quite limited. The acoustic jars, sundial, plaque and graffiti are all inaccessible or obscured. The aim must be to design means by which visitors encounter these objects which become the most memorable and revealing experience of the visit.
3. The audience - **Who is it for?**

Initial consultation (combined with audience development planning undertaken at Woolsthorpe Manor) has enabled us to define distinct groups who are most likely to use the site and benefit most from the experience.

3.1 Visitor profile

Consultation has identified target audiences and their needs for St John’s following the redevelopment project:

- **Local community.** Locals look to the church for regular engagement, as a place of worship and a community asset bringing a sense of identity, belonging and social cohesion. Developing the site as a sustainable heritage attraction and learning centre will reinstate it at the heart of the local community, fostering local pride, providing opportunities for local people to get involved through: skills sharing, volunteering and activities and events. It will bring learning opportunities to the village with its program of arts and science activity.

- **Families.** The Church will continue to support those using the site socially. The conversations between generations will supported by interpretation and volunteers who encourage questioning and sharing. The Church will provide an enjoyable place to take visiting friends and family in the area.

- **Tourist visitors.** This group will be drawn to the Church as part of a wider offer including: local shops, pubs, walks and heritage attractions such as Woolsthorpe Manor. Most will be day tourists looking for an interesting and informative experience and may well visit one or more other attractions in the same day. The site’s proximity to Stamford, Newark and Grantham as well as other local attractions needs to be borne in mind when working to engage this audience. Productive partnerships with a range of organisations including local businesses and attractions, the County Council heritage and tourism departments, Visit Lincoln Partnership will help promote the church as a quality tourist attraction.

- **International tourists and partners - pilgrims.** This group is likely to arrive with a greater than average knowledge of and interest in history, architecture or science. Their ambition might be more academic or emotional than social and their experience needs to be tailored accordingly.

- **School groups** – Key Stages 1-3 and children with Special Educational Needs. Every learner, whether from formal or informal settings, likes to learn in different ways so every learning activity, event or resource for St John’s needs to be developed with this mind. There needs to be opportunities for learners to engage with the Learning Centre through a range of forms including visual, written, verbal and kinaesthetic. Newton’s own character and learning style should be a mandate to support those not well served by the mainstream education system.

- **FE and university students.** Students at this stage of learning may require more in depth support with their studies. Placements with real life briefs and measures would be beneficial to many. For others, access to the archives and volunteer knowledge would enable them to develop new research activity. Certain courses would wish to deliver practical experience through programmes of placement and on-site study.

- **Adult Learners** including U3A and WEA groups. Users from this group span both those learning for personal enjoyment and those looking to learn to broaden their opportunities. The Church should continue to develop links with lifelong learning groups locally and support and enrich their learning. The existing volunteers have extensive knowledge and skills to provide a range of learning activities for adults including traditional crafts, research, photography. Those skills can then be shared between existing groups and Church volunteers. The Church could also develop a programme of talks and lectures based upon church history, Isaac Newton and Colsterworth heritage to be delivered to adult groups off site.

- **People with mobility difficulties and those with sensory impairments.** People in this group will find a visit more comfortable and enjoyable through access and interpretation improvements.
3.2 Audit of existing interpretation

The success of the visit hinges very much on first person interpretation and the quality of the guide, which almost everyone reports being excellent. Additionally, there was noted a need to allow visitors to pace their own visit. Care could be taken to ensure that the visitors have time to ‘get their bearings’ and understand what is on offer. Some visitors may prefer to use the interpretation to steer their own way round the site, others may prefer to engage with the church warden.

While quite dense in presentation, the printed guide contains much information. The challenge for future is to convey this information in an accessible and immediate way. The spaces within the church have very minimal interpretation, relying instead on a strong guided tour or visitor’s prior knowledge. Models of the church through the ages help illustrate the site’s development. Several rooms and features are picked out by simple labels to help visitors orientate themselves – ‘Sir Isaac Newton’s First Sundial’ etc. These core elements of interpretation were augmented by events such as those within Gravity Fields festival. Visitors reported during consultation how popular and effective these were. Again, this plan seeks to build on these successful approaches to interpretation.

Where visitor’s choose to guide themselves, they stand a strong chance of missing key elements of the site’s significance. The fact that the Newton family would have entered the building through the Manorial entrance and worshipped together with their workers in the Newton aisle could easily be lost on visitors. So too could details such as the graffiti on the window cills in this area (potentially of great significance) and the sundial, Newton plaque and carved corbel.
4 The Proposals - **How** will we communicate?

4.1 Overview and vision - general principles and desired impact

Through consultation we have established some general principles and aims of communication for St John's:

**Be sensitive** - remember the man, his faith and this place of worship and do not overpower or dilute this

**Be evocative** - inspire people to learn more and remain conscious of their interests/references

**Be warm and welcoming** - create a strong sense of place and personality

**Remain rooted** – serve the community and local needs

**Listen to others** - strive to tell a core story and continually refresh with the perspectives of others

**Learn from him** - use his voice where we have it and keep others separate

**Remember today** - look for echoes in contemporary Colsterworth and bring the best of what is happening today to Woolsthorpe
What kind of impact do we want?

The following are what we have established through consultation as the experiences we wish visitors to have:

**Stimulate the senses**


**Encourage exploration**

Open the drawer. Look through the documents. Predict the effect. Test your theory. Explore key objects. Ask a question.

**Tap into emotion**

The site evokes emotions and encourages empathy. Visitors will consider Isaac Newton as a person, like them. They might consider whether he was lonely or content, proud or humble, confident or fearful. The work the Church does today will amplify this. With real benefit to real people overt in the interpretation and experience, visitors will relate emotionally with the site’s cause and understand it stems from the legacy of Isaac Newton.

**Part of the Church**

People feel they are more than a visitor; they are joining in celebration and exploration. They might be invited to help care for the building or contribute to its work, participate in an experiment or creative project. They can leave their mark on this special place and take home a meaningful memento. The boundary between visitor and volunteer is blurred.

**Part of a community**

Local people use the site to stimulate and share memories. Sometimes this will be with guides, sometimes it will be with who they are visiting with; friends and family. Sometimes it will be sharing with any future visitor to the Church. A place that collects responses and stories.

**Inspired**

The Church and its stories inspire successive generations and encourage a reflection on contemporary life and issues. A programme of art and science activities will encourage people to engage in different ways and perceive the site as ever changing and dynamic.
We need to communicate the basic facts so people relate to the story. Some groups of visitors will require more background knowledge - local, national and world events, living conditions, technology of different periods etc. Others will bring this information and even personal experience with them. For these visitors there is likely to be a more immediate connection to our story, but all should be able to relate to the universal themes of food, family, everyday life, faith, emotions and community.

One key perception which we hope audiences will leave with is that we owe Isaac Newton a huge amount. His story of perseverance in the face of adversity, of faith in his own convictions is a lesson to all. His scientific revelations have shaped the world we live in today. There are many interpretations of his life and each person will take away a different perspective. One thing is certain and that is that we should seek to use his story to encourage visitors to reevaluate aspects of their own lives in light of beliefs, experiences and values. For some this may be a challenge to their attitudes and values, for others a reminder of what is really important in their lives.

4.2 **What** is our story?

4.2.1 Spirit of Place

To act as a reference point for all design decisions and a focus for activity. It’s why people should love the place and what it does.

> The priest’s words reverberate around this sacred space; light plays upon the resting place of father and grandfather. A young mind contemplates the true nature of God’s creation and his own purpose within it. You feel here the echoes of Newton and his legacy; you can sense his lifelong bond to this place. His learning here would set him on a path to become the brightest star of the scientific enlightenment, yet to him God governs all things and knows all that is or can be done.

> Take a moment to appreciate the passing of time as the bells toll in the tower. Bells that Newton heard hourly and utilised to calibrate his early experiments. Touch the font where he was baptised in the bitter cold of January 1642. This is a place of worship still and sacred ground to scientists who have paid homage here for the last 300 years. Light a candle now to remember this moment by. This is not just a place to look back though. Newton left a challenge for future generations and the minds of any era can become as excited as his at this powerful and inspiring place. Today you walk in the footsteps of the great man and many who have followed him and enjoy the place as he did. Marvel at what thoughts were stirred here.
4.2.2 Core themes

Using the approaches in 4.1 we aim to tell the story of Newton’s inspiration to understand the works of God.

A number of sub themes have also been refined through consultation:

• **A community through time** - the development of the parish church from Saxon era to modern times and the community which it served. This should have a focus on the everyday people of the parish, their occupations, how they lived, their beliefs and evidence of them in the village today.
• **The Colsterworth that nurtured Newton** – friends and sites that Newton knew in the village. The influence that these early experiences had on the young man and traces left today - family names in the church yard, the graffiti on the building, the River Witham (where he experimented with water wheels), the lanes he walked etc.
• **Those that made Newton** - mother, teacher, uncle, siblings, rector. A focus on those individuals that gave Newton the impetus (intentionally and otherwise) to become the man we know. What are their stories and how might Isaac have developed had it not been for fate and self-belief?
• **Discovering Newton through science** - an evolving programme of the work the church undertakes to better understand this building - acoustic mapping of the building and sound jars, genetic osteology on the bones in the Newton Chapel, scanning graffiti on the stonework, testing the sundial. A physical experience of the church to understand the principles which occupied his young mind. Place the gnomon to tell the time with his sun dial, measure the speed of sound with the echo in the Nave, split white light from the windows.

Secondary themes:
• **The Church after Newton** – saving and restoring the building, community involvement, recent structural repairs and the next phase in the history of the church (HLF project, restoration and redisplay).

4.2.3 Resource inventory

The funded programme of redevelopment is due to run from summer 2019 to summer 2020 and will have a programme of activity as well as staff support. Previous and current volunteers are a vital resource as is their collective knowledge and research, some of which has been published. The locations around the village which relate directly to events and people are also key to telling the story. Need to define these.

Good relationships with partners and other attractions such as Gravity Fields, Woolsthorpe Manor and the Trinity College mean that resources and objects could be borrowed to suit. The kudos of Sir Isaac Newton’s church is likely to open many doors and enable some very high quality work to take place.

13.12.18
4.3 **Where** is the experience? Physical Context

The setting of the Church evokes an immediate atmosphere which visitors respond to. We want visitors to know what their role is in the experience; how to behave. Given the extensive catalogue of luminaries who have made a pilgrimage to Woolsthorpe and Colsterworth over the last 350 years, the most appropriate role is as a pilgrim. Visitors may well bring their own reasons for visiting, but the overwhelming atmosphere must be one of following in the footsteps of many pilgrims. This is their chance to experience the site that meant so much to Newton and to be similarly inspired.

The whole site is naturally compartmentalised and lends itself to revealing the whole story episodically. The stories that can be told in each room and space should build to a whole. Minimal orientation and signage is necessary to help visitors around what is a small site and what is necessary should be very subtle and sensitive to its surrounding. Too many incongruous elements will serve to break the spell for visitors. Simple way marking outside and within the church and sensitive guiding from church wardens should ensure each visitor finds what they wish and creates an experience that suits their needs.

Of the almost infinite array of display methods available we suggesting a limited palette selected using the principles of communication developed during consultation. Where approaches inside the church are necessarily limited, we propose to use more flexible spaces such as the church yard and Newton aisle and Chapel to create more accessible spaces that promote investigation, reflection and social interaction.
4.4 **How** will we tell the story? The visitor journey and wider engagement

Overview

The redisplayed St John’s will focus on providing an experience which provokes conversation, learning, longer term engagement and inspiration. Interpretation will be light touch and sensitive to its surroundings, it should not feel like a museum, but rather a building to experience. One that touched and was touched by genius. Echoes of its past and inhabitants will be present (documents, quotes, objects etc.) reminding the visitor throughout who inhabited this space.

A series of themes and story strands have been developed which will allow a flexible approach to managing the site in the long term. The overarching story of the site will not change, but plans will ensure that the impact on the visitor and connections to their lives are consistently the main objective. This is a space where people can relate and contribute, a site that remains relevant.

4.4.1 Pre-arrival and remote access

The online experience should be both an intriguing flavour of the Church and its work as well as a natural extension of the on-site experience. The selection and presentation of 10 animations around objects/features which summarise the site and its story will provide an introduction to the Church and what to expect. These can be authored and narrated by participants in the project - the school pupil, the expert etc. A virtual tour of the interior with hot spots revealing features would be available using 360° photography. Links to and further development of the community archive website ([http://www.villagearchivegroup.com/index.php](http://www.villagearchivegroup.com/index.php)) with the opportunity to contribute shared histories will add depth and ensure the experience continues to develop.
Outreach and communications

The talks programme will be expanded to reach target groups with pop-up object handling sessions, presence at related events and creative activities which are inspired by the heritage of the site. Visitors will be aware of the Church by the work that it does outside the building itself, by its presence at other community events and association with other groups. A programme of social media activity, posting on research, recording visitor responses, events and creative activity would engage both existing and potential audiences, and promote ways in which they could become involved.

Material for learners would be downloadable with teacher’s notes, pre and post visit activities. The Chapel will provide a space for schools to share the work they do for others to use as inspiration. This would focus on young people developing their own experiments, inventions and making a contribution through creative activity. A rich programme of arts and science activity will be offered through residencies, partnerships and further engagement with Gravity Fields.

Satellite displays will link the site to other attractions and bring attention to St John’s. These might be with existing partners such as the Manor (church graffiti), Trinity College, Grantham Museum, Royal Society etc.

The Church could join the Silent Spaces (https://silentspace.org.uk ) network and advertise itself as a space for quiet reflection once a month where visitors can enjoy a very different experience. The Church and church yard will be set aside for those who wish to soak up its atmosphere.
4.4.2 Arrival

Visitors will be met by a new entrance panel (at both East and North entrances to the church yard) introducing the purpose of the site:

St John The Baptist Church: Isaac Newton Learning Centre
Worship Inspiration Celebration

Alternatively, a modern take on Stukeley’s imagined memorial is produced to announce just what kind of place the visitor is entering.
4.4.3 Church yard

Time can be taken to explore just how much the village has changed over the last 1000 years. Several gravestones will be selected for further research (a school and Village Archive Group project) so visitors can explore who lived in Colsterworth and their part in the community. Potential themes could be: Links to Newton; Local trades and occupations - agriculture, coaching, quarrying etc.; ‘They lived in my house’ based on the research of school pupils and their families.

These could be presented as carved/etched details on benches in the church yard, a webapp element of the village archive website or a simple hand-held guide available from the porch. Similarly, the same form of interpretation on the external graffiti would help reveal details about who has worked and worshiped here, their beliefs and even their sense of humour.

Attention will be drawn to the sundial (restored so it can be read) on the south wall with an angled plinth at ground level with interpretation making the link to Newton, the Manor sundial and his early interest measuring time and the movement of heavenly bodies. Voice: BHI/student from Kings

The sense of arrival will be enhanced by a shadow-sign below the sun dial reading: ‘Nature and Nature’s laws lay hid in night God said, Let Newton be! and all was light.’
4.5.4 The Font and baptistry

Visitors will be greeted by stone tablets set into the floor (replacing the current heating grilles). These will carry quotes from Newton relating to the site, his legacy and his faith. “It is the perfection of God’s works that they are all done with the greatest simplicity. He is the God of order and not of confusion.” or “This most beautiful System of the Sun, Planets and Comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being.”

One tablet at the foot of the font proclaims words spoken at Newton’s baptism; introducing his lifetime of faith. A new artwork commissioned from Rob Godman or Caroline Locke will form a shallow bowl tuned to the frequency of the acoustic jars or bells in the tower filled water. Visitors can see the water ripple as they trigger audio produced digitally from acoustic models of the building. This will be housed inside the reconstructed original font bowl if this is found to be buried under the font when relocated. The bowl itself will be fused back together in the style of a gilt kintsugi ceramic repair to emphasise its precious nature.

The new window will re-enforce Newton’s work using the seven colours of his spectrum.
4.5.5 Nave

Visitors will be invited to stand on a large circular area marked out (potentially in the form of a compass rose, topograh marker or diagram of the solar system). If a topography marker is chosen as the form, this would link the site to others important in Newton's learning - Woolsthorpe Manor, Kings School, Trinity College, Royal Society etc. This will form the point from which to begin a virtual reality exploration of the church in its earlier forms.

A VR headset will allow visitors to explore the church as Newton will have known it (based on architectural and documentary research). This could be a simple static augmented reality environment or a more immersive space with characters, sounds and interactivity. This could be adapted to allow visitors to experience other spaces relating to Newton - his Solomon's Temple model, Boullee's planned cenotaph etc.

Turning to the East, visitors can clap and listen for the echo to appreciate the delay of the sound waves reaching them. They will be able to make the connection to this and the acoustic jars in the wall above them. A fixed reflecting telescope would enable visitors to view these from the ground.

The footprint of the Newton pew will be marked out in the same stone as the carved markers. This could include the names of the family as they may have been seated for worship. This would encourage the visitor to imagine the young Isaac at prayer and absorbing the words of the Rector.
Newton Manorial aisle

Visitors entering through the Newton Manorial door will be met by an inscription stone reading ‘We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy’

Chairs in the Newton Aisle (where the Newton family pew once stood) continue the thread and carry the names of the Newton household during his childhood and Annum Mirabilis. The presence of these and stone markers will encourage visitors to sit and relate this part of the church to Newton at prayer. A torch will enable visitors to explore the church’s graffiti in this area themselves.

The space between the door and entrance to the Newton Chapel will focus on Newton’s theological studies and how he has been venerated himself for 350 years. A series of modular display units will include handling plinth, cabinet and angled lectern will provide a flexible display which can be refreshed to suit new themes. Facsimile copies of his papers on religious subjects and his calculations and model of the Temple of Solomon under the quote ‘God created everything by number, weight and measure.’ Sub themes will explore the turmoil of the Church of England in the middle of the 17th Century; a most impressionable age for Newton. The rigid social structure observed in worship during Newton’s day will also be a focus.

The aumbry will have a glazed door and house the (replica) silver plate believed to have been given by Newton
4.5.6 South Aisle

There will be similar modular display furniture to the North aisle. This will include small built-in cabinets, plinths with changeable graphics, mounted objects and moving image projection from overhead track onto replica documents.

The themes of this space will be restoration of the Church - which will tell the story of the community effort in restoring the site; Inspired by the Church - which will be a changing celebration of the creative work undertaken in response to this site both through the voices of the people behind the project - the volunteers, students, conservators and tradespeople who carry out the work and learn from here. Track lighting will also allow overhead projection of moving image onto the surface of displays to help animate the story and give further flexibility.

Fragments of the church will be mounted on the wall above with short interpretation to act as a timeline illustrate 1000 years at the centre of the community. The Saxon cross will form the start of this timeline.

Group visitors (including schools) will be able to use this as an activity space with some small space for storing resources. Creative workshops will be held in this space for diverse learning groups and at events.
4.5.8 The Newton Chapel

A new ledger stone to Newton’s forebears will be placed on the newly laid floor in an order which will allow visitors to see the family relationship and connection to this building. Visitors will be invited to light a candle to mark their visit and respect those that shaped the character of the young Isaac. The Turnor plaque will be lit properly and subtle interpretation will explain the succession of luminaries who have shown their respect in such ways, here and elsewhere.

The sundial will be lit from below. Subtle interpretation will allow visitors to appreciate where it was originally sited and how Newton used it in conjunction with the bells of this church in his experiments with measuring time.
4.5.9 The Chancel and Sanctuary

The restored reredos will be a reminder of the many examples of commissioned artwork that this church has benefitted from and link with the new stained glass window in the Newton Chapel and Baptistry.

‘Particle’ Walker’s monument will have interpretation to explain Newton’s words and relationship with the man.
4.5.10 Tower

Visitors will be able to climb the stairs to view the ringing floor in the tower and view the bell ringing ropes and rhythms board. Interpretation will help visitors appreciate that it was these same bells that Newton heard calling him and his family to church and marking the passing of the day. His work with clocks and measuring time must have been influenced by this space and he even later paid for a gallery above this space which was sadly removed by Victorian restorers. The remaining filled socket holes will be visible from the balcony and will connect with the recreation they have seen on the VR headset.

Visitors will be shown the bell tower in small groups if they wish. A focus will be on Newton’s interest in measuring time and views out to Woolsthorpe and North Witham.
4.5.12 On leaving

Back at the entrance they can read and make a response to their visit. The theme or question could change or options could be given, but the visitor would be invited to record their reflections and ask questions which might form the basis of future projects. The visitor would understand that these were to be read by others and would be kept by the Church as a growing archive and record of wider society’s reflection on the past. Visitors will be invited to complete a postcard to send to a friend or family about their visit. Feedback will also be kept in the form of comment cards which visitors can stamp with the date and post into a box.

A small space near the South entrance will house a display of items for sale as well as community produced products. The story of how these have been produced will accompany the product.

In the porch with text facing the visitor as they leave, a further ledger stone reading “To explain all nature is too difficult a task for any one man or even for any one age.’ or ‘Tis much better to do a little with certainty, & leave the rest for others that come after you"
4.5.13 The Manor walk

A series of markers similar to those throughout the church will guide visitors between the two venues and reflect the significance of the spaces they pass through (waterwheels by the Witham, sheep when passing the fields, lanterns on kites etc.) This could be an artist led project with the school to design the markers.

The trail will be augmented by the community history archive with visitors able to bring up recordings, images and stories in situ using Historypin. Visitors will fade between the historic and the contemporary view of Colsterworth and surrounding countryside through the camera on their smart phones. This will ensure that the trails remain fresh and owned by the community.

5.1.3 The Co-Op

Artist designed paper bags with pieces of interpretation on for customers to read while they eat their sandwiches. Limited time only?

5.1.4 The White Lion

The walls will be hung with large format photographs of project activities and features in the church. Tables will have table talkers with quotes and information on that season’s activity at the Church (using a design template that can be easily updated)