Fact file

St Barnabas Church was built in 1911.

The building was upgraded in 1932 and a substantial parish hall added. That Hall burnt down in 1961 and was rebuilt in 1964.

The two building were connected by a large underground cellar that housed a joint boiler.

Eco-Church profile

This project has improved our eco-Church profile

- The boilers consume a third of the gas used previously yet the Church and hall are always warmer than before.
- Heating the Church from cold requires about three hours—a big improvement on eight hours with the old boiler.
- Across our suite of rooms and halls, we can use one, two or three boilers at a time, and therefore zone the heat, with associated saving in fuel and cost.
- Enhancing the heating means we can rent the Church to a greater number of groups, with attendant increase in goodwill, income, and social standing.

The Church's first boiler was powered by coke. Its second boiler was installed in 1984 and consumed prodigious amounts of gas. It cost a fortune when it worked; it also cost a lot went wrong, which was often. It failed most winters and new parts had to be made by hand. Our failing boiler caused discomfort, condensation, and loss of income when bookings had to be cancelled. It also caused a great deal of ill-will.

We replaced the heating in the Church in 2014, In addition to heating the Church, it also took much pressure off the main boiler. It nevertheless failed completely in 2016 so we installed a second, independent heating system the Parish Hall.

To heat the Church, we installed two energy-efficient combi-boilers in the community room—a large space that was once the choir vestry and now accommodates a wide array of groups and clubs, all of whom want to be warm. One boiler heats the main worship space of the Church while the other services the chancel located behind the altar and two smaller rooms, both the community room itself and the large, modern Church office.

To heat the entire Parish Hall required a single domestic combi-boiler. Our Hall is the local community centre and lies at the centre of our public engagement, so maintaining a comfortable temperature is essential; its reliability is a matter of pride as much as budget and efficiency.

We chose to use modern convector technology when we replaced the heavy cast-iron radiators in the Church. They enhanced the efficiency and therefore cost less to run. We can now worship in a warm liturgical space. These convectors and boilers work together to increase the internal temperature to comfort in three hours rather than worship in a Church with the chill taken off, and that after consuming much more gas over eight long hours. The final benefit: our convectors look much nicer and are easier to clean!

St Barnabas Church serves a poorer part of Oldham, itself a town with daunting levels of poverty. Accordingly, we rent the Church to a wide array of small, local clubs and groups. It's become the venue of choice for a great local people to follow the clubs and projects that generate companionship, betterment, and improves social cohesion.

Above We can easily hide the two new Church boilers easily inside a standard wardrobe.

Above We can heat the entire parish hall with this single combi-boiler. It's a snug fit inside this narrow cupboard, itself built as part of a bespoke storage area in our new meeting room. More storage resides behind the other two doors.