

A future for Saint Michael's Church, Cold Kirby.

Notes of a consultation meeting with the residents of Cold Kirby.

Cold Kirby Village Hall - 19 October 2026; 6:30pm

Present: 24 attendees from the village of Cold Kirby; 5 Trustees from The Saint Aelred's Pilgrim Trail Society CIO (TSAPTS) – George Gyte (GG), Ian Robinson (IR), Janet Curd, Anne Stewart and Mal Gyte; 2 Directors of Irving Patrick Consulting – Anne Irving (AI) and John Patrick.

Meeting: The purpose of the meeting was to consult with the residents of Cold Kirby on the possible future uses for the closed church of Saint Michael in Cold Kirby. The church has been closed since December 2024 and is no longer used for public worship. It currently stands empty and unused and is being marketed for sale by the Church Commissioners. The meeting had been initiated by TSAPTS, the charity which devised and maintains the 41 mile, 9 stage Saint Aelred's Pilgrim Trail which unites the 9 churches in the ecclesiastical parishes of Helmsley and Upper Ryedale including Saint Michael's. TSAPTS wished to present a possible future use option for Saint Michael's to the residents of Cold Kirby and to hear their views about that proposal as well as any other possible uses for the church.

The meeting was preceded by an opportunity to look inside the closed church of Saint Michael's.

The meeting gathered informally at 6:30pm with refreshments and the opportunity to look at 6 information boards which had been prepared for the meeting. These boards formed the structure for the meeting and the outline of TSAPTS proposal to repurpose Saint Michael's Church into low cost overnight accommodation for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and visitors to the North York Moors National Park (NYMNP). The 6 boards outlined:

- TSAPTS proposal for Saint Michael's and its relationship to the Saint Aelred Pilgrim Trail.
- The history and heritage of the church.
- What happens next (1) Saint Michael's recent listing as a Grade II building and the outline of a feasibility study for which TSAPTS received a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) grant in September 2026.
- What happens next (2) A more detailed breakdown of the Feasibility study of 25 tasks across 6 main areas of work which amount in total to a feasibility study expected to cost around £128,000 in total.
- Project Timeline – highlighting 5 main stages from the feasibility study starting in August 2026 to a possible opening of a completed project in May 2031. No building works are expected to start before November 2029.
- Share your views – a board where questions, ideas, views and concerns were noted via 'post-it' notes to inform further discussion and consultation.

Jerry Walker – Chair of the Cold Kirby Village Institute who kindly hosted the consultation, formally welcomed people to the meeting and introduced GG and IR from TSAPTS.

GG on behalf of TSAPTS thanked people for attending and summarised the proposal that TSAPTS wished to discuss. He highlighted the history of Saint Michael's and how it was still a much valued part of the village and community even though it was now closed. He shared what had motivated TSAPTS to consider whether the closed church could be repurposed into low cost accommodation and noted that whatever the ultimate preferred use of Saint Michael's was, if it required NLHF funding

then the use had not only to be capable of restoring and preserving its heritage but must also function as a viable and sustainable business for the long-term so that surpluses made by the business could be re-invested back into the ongoing maintenance of the building.

GG concluded by introducing IR a Trustee of TSAPTS and the project lead for this NLHF Feasibility study and also Anne Irving and John Patrick from Irving Patrick Consultants who were being retained by TSAPTS to act as project managers for this study.

IR briefly reprised his role and explained that TSAPTS proposal for the future of Saint Michael's was to conserve it and repurpose it into low cost overnight accommodation containing a minimum of 12 bed spaces split across 4 or 5 separate bedrooms, for Walkers, visitors, cyclists and equestrians. He explained that:

- The church was ideally placed, being at a junction of the Saint Aelred's Pilgrim Trail and the Cleveland Way.
- The Saint Aelred's Pilgrim Trail and indeed the western part of the NYMNP suffered from having no low cost overnight accommodation for visitors.
- The Youth Hostel in Helmsley had closed in March 2026 and so the need for new alternative low cost overnight accommodation for visitors was greater than ever.

IR then spoke in more detail about two of the information boards – (a)What happens next (2) – what does the feasibility study do and contain and (b) the Project Timeline. He noted that:

- The feasibility study was a chance to understand what it would cost to restore the church and also what it would cost to potentially repurpose the church into low cost accommodation.
- The aim was that at the end of the feasibility project (October 2027), TSAPTS would have enough information to be able to decide whether a further and much bigger bid to the NLHF should be made to actually undertake all of the work required.
- The feasibility study contains 25 separate 'tasks' which are mainly professional studies across various disciplines. The majority of studies are surveys related to the current condition of the church and these would be undertaken first before moving on to focus on potential repurposing designs and the attendant issues of access, utilities, parking and planning.
- The feasibility study, which lasts until the end of October 2027 does not include any physical work on the church. No building works will take place in this period. The feasibility study is only concerned with gathering information on the condition of the building, designs for a repurposed building and the business model which must sit alongside any further bid for further funds from the NLHF.
- If, at the end of the feasibility study, it was decided to go ahead with a full-scale capital bid to the NLHF, then even if things progressed relatively 'trouble free;' works to the building and therefore any potential disruption in the village to do that work – would not take place for another 3 years (estimate November 2029).

Questions: The majority of the evening focussed on listening and responding to residents views on the TSAPTS proposal. A lot of questions were asked and the responses given have been placed in a separate "Question & Answer" document attached to these notes.

There was an opportunity towards the end of the meeting for residents to complete 'comment slips' to be left in a feedback box in the Village Hall, or to leave 'post-it' notes with comments placed on the 'Share your views' information board, or they could take away a 'Have Your Say!' leaflet which detailed web site addresses and other ways in which people could leave their views and how they could become involved in the proposed project.

Next Steps: IR and GG indicated throughout the evening that TSAPTS hopes that this first consultation event will be the first of 3 or 4 of these throughout the period of the feasibility study. The timing of future meetings will largely be determined by the pace of completion of the tasks in the feasibility study and therefore whether we have significant news to share with the village and seek it's further feedback. In the meantime, it is TSAPTS hope that conversations, ideas and concerns continue to flow through the use of digital channels. Residents are invited to visit www.saintaelredspilgrimtrail.com to get the latest news and information about the Trail and the Saint Michael's Lodge Project and we hope to be able to deliver some updates via the village WhatsApp group etc. These meeting notes and those of future meetings will be displayed in Cold Kirby Village Hall where we also hope that the information boards and feedback forms and box will remain so that people can give views at any time throughout the period of the feasibility study.

Conclusion: Quite deliberately, TSAPTS did not set out to take any kind of vote on their proposal at this meeting – residents quite rightly needing time to understand the proposal and ask questions.

The meeting was asked by IR if there were any alternative proposals from the village either for a completely different possible use for Saint Michael's or ideas that might be added to the TSAPTS proposal. No alternative suggestions for the use of Saint Michael's were made at the meeting. There was discussion about what would happen if no use for the building could be found and AI outlined the position for a grade II listed building when owned by the church.

The meeting ended at c8:30pm.

ICR 20 October 2026.