

Letter from the Inhabitants of the Parish of Wheatley to the Lord Bishop of Oxford.

To the Right Revd. Father in God, Lord Bishop of Oxford.

The Humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the Parish of Wheatley annexed to Cuddesdon
Humbly sheweth.

That your Petitioners have long laboured under the very disagreeable circumstance of being greatly straitened for room in the Church or Chapel (of) Ease, which according to the left accounts upwards of two centuries ago as the place of Divine Worship for the inhabitants of this Village & its Dependencies.

That the inconveniency of want of room is such, that the principal Inhabitants cannot take a friend on a visit to Church with them with the certainty of accommodation. That it frequently happens that they themselves are incommodated by strangers and others for whom there is not proper room. If that for these reasons Divine worship is too often neglected contrary (to) the wish of the Inhabitants.

That the late Archbishop Secker when Bishop of Oxford at his own private expenses, bestowed several repairs upon the Chapel of Ease about thirty years ago, since which Time, the roofs, chancel, Tower & every part of it have been falling into decay & ruin.

That the Inhabitants of Wheatley & its dependencies are all Rack renters & people who work for their living, & who severely feel the late heavy rise of the taxes and that though the roof of the Chancel is falling & the tower in the greatest danger, it is not in their power with justice to themselves & families to repair or rebuild those damages which are now wanted and will soon increase the ruin of the whole fabric.

Under these disagreeable circumstances, it was with greatest satisfaction that your Petitioners understood that Thomas Sims, Esqr. of Denton, a native of this place, considering the inconveniency of and decay of our old ruinous Chapel and out of pious affection to the place of his nativity did & does intend to build a proper & commodious place of worship such as may do credit to the place & his own memory. Your petitioners farther understand that this is an object very much at their intended Benefactor's heart, that he willed & ordained such benefaction by his last will & Testament, but that in the pleasing hope of seeing it finished he is very anxious & desirous of seeing the good work begun in his own life-time.

That your P(etitioners) have heard with great sorrow & regret that your Lordship is averse to this intended benefaction of Thomas Sims. Esqr. Mr Sims not only proposes as above said, but intends also to found a Charity School for ever at Wheatley. How far the disappointment of an old man in one favourite object may lead him to relinquish another we presume not to foretell, but your Petitioners beg leave to lay that consideration before your Lordship's attention.

That Mr Sims has no near relation, that he most cordially consents to this Petition are truths which will bear the strictest enquiry.

That while your Petitioners pray for your Lordship's consent to and approbation of the aforesaid pious intentions of Mr Sims, they know & always shall be willing and ready to acknowledge their dependence on the Mother church of Cuddesdon, that all expensive & vexatious laws ----? on the will of Mr Sims may be effectually prevented. Your Petitioners entreat that your L(ordship) would be pleased to take their humble petition into your beneficent consideration.

For which they shall ever pray.