

St Hugh of Lincoln, Letchworth Garden City
Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council
11 May 2016, 8pm. Fortescue Hall

Growing in Faith Parish Building Project

Present: Fr Jimmy, Phil Clarke (Chair, Parish Council)
Alan Scouller (Chair, Premises Committee)
Ian Hunt (Chair, Finance Committee)
Ann-Marie Palmer (Secretary, Parish Council)
Members of Finance and Premises Committees plus approximately 40
parishioners

In attendance: Colin Smart, Kyle Smart Associates Limited

Apologies: Peter Spreckley, Angela Spreckley, Sr Joan

Phil Clarke welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced speakers, Alan Scouller, Cliff Marshall and Colin Smart. Fr Jimmy opened the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was then handed over to *Alan Scouller, Chair of the Premises Committee*

1) **Need for a new Building**

Alan advised that the need for the new building had been presented to the Parish Council previously and was well documented but for the purposes of the meeting presented the following report:

- ~ *I looked at the needs of the Parish and prepared a report for the Premises Committee. Having spoken to representatives of various Parish groups and some other Parishioners, I found substantial support for the Parish to have a properly equipped and furnished meeting / training room. Not all active groups would use it, for example in the case of First Communion preparation the Hall would need to be used due to the number of children and parents involved, so too for the Youth Club. Some Prayer and Discussion groups would prefer to continue to meet in their houses but a number of Prayer groups use the Sacristy or the Church and would welcome a meeting room facility.*
- ~ *The provision of an office within the Parish House was necessary and is useful for very small groups but it does not provide space to meet the needs of larger groups – it will take a maximum of 8. Fortescue Hall is suitable for social and other events but would need to be converted at substantial cost to meet the needs of the Parish for meetings and would then become less suitable for its present purposes including commercial lettings which now provides much needed income.*
- ~ *A priority need is for a suitable room for the Children's Liturgy Group at the 9.30 Mass on Sundays. The numbers vary, on one Sunday there were 25 children but numbers can be 30 or even 40. The Sacristy and adjacent room are not suitable for the long term and the group needs access to a room easily entered from the Church. The Confirmation preparation group would favour using a meeting room rather than the Hall if it were to be sufficiently large for breaking into small discussion groups. The room would also be available and useful for smaller groups like SVP, KSC, SASH and Prayer and discussion groups.*
- ~ *Father Jimmy would wish the room to be used for the training of Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, Catechists, and Welcoming Groups and for Baptism preparation.*

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- ~ *The urgent need in Fr Jimmy's view is for a room for adult education in support of Evangelisation promoted by the Bishops of England and Wales and seen as a priority by Pope Francis in his exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium". The Pope emphasises the importance of the Parish as "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters". He says, "The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers" (paragraph 28). Pope Francis told us he can't run the church on his own and Bishops and Priests can't do it alone. We, the laity have to play our part.*

Alan Scouller

Alan advised that following presentation of his report to the Premises committee, the view was that we need a Parish Room.

2) **Presentation of Plans**

(a) Introduction – Cliff Marshall, Premises Committee

- ~ Cliff advised that following the Premises Committee accepting the need for the room, Chris Fanning, Diocesan Surveyor was asked to approach an architect to look at some possibilities. Initially Colin Smart of Kyle Smart presented 3 options to the committee, one utilising the space at the side of the church and two at the back of the church. However following a meeting of the Parish Council it was clear that the Parish needed to get its finances in order and proceedings were halted.
- ~ Following the appointment of 3 new members to the Premises committee, with expertise in the area, they had a look at the original plans provided with fresh eyes and agreed that the side of the church option would be best.
- ~ A new building at the back of the church would require a lot of work and cost to build up to the right level and with lots of disruption to the church.
- ~ Advantages of building between the church and the museum include the building being separate from the church; the church won't be disrupted during building; it will be an independent property in terms of heating / access etc. With the slope of the land we only need to build what is needed. The building may be regarded as an annexe and not an extension which may save some VAT.

(b) Appointed Architect, Colin Smart of Kyle Smart

- ~ Colin gave a brief overview of the firm; being medium sized with a team of 11 architects. They are keen to work with people to ensure outcome is exactly what they are looking for. They have worked with the Diocese since 2002 and know how it works, but are also used to working closely with parishes.
- ~ As part of the presentation Colin showed examples of recently completed works (Church Halls and Church extensions but also older persons independent living property). CS advised that there is as much work in a project of £20k or £40m.
- ~ It is important we get what we need. Colin showed early plans, and advised that no one was happy with how the plans looked against the church. He then showed the plan that is currently being looked at in 3D. It is a simple, non extravagant room with storage, a kitchen facility and toilet. The room will have a glass roof and will therefore be light and airy. Windows will be matched to the church windows and they know they can source the same bricks as the church for the building. The room will have gated access and a covered walkway.

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The following covers some questions asked:

- ~ Access from the church – the current accessible toilet will be relocated and there will be an external door out to the new building. Colin ran 3D video showing the access.
- ~ Will provide easy access for Children's Liturgy and will be wheelchair accessible.
- ~ Size 9 x 4.5 metres.
- ~ The car park resurfacing will not be undertaken as part of this job but will be completed after.
- ~ It was noted that the flat roof of the building reflected the porch but there was a concern re maintenance. Colin advised that being a single storey building this should not be an issue and should last around 30 years.
- ~ It was felt that the room would hold approx 20 people which raised a concern for Children's liturgy, however, Alan advised that following previous consultation with the group that they were satisfied with the space and how they would use the room would be sufficient.
- ~ It was thought that approximately 4 car parking spaces would be lost in what was felt to be a difficult area to park.
- ~ It was asked if the size of the room could be increased. Colin advised that another metre could easily be added to the length and ultimately this was down to budget against space. There would be an approximate additional cost of £2,000 for each additional square metre.
- ~ The current plans show a 1m gap with the museum boundary but it was stated that this could be reduced to the Heritage minimum of 600mm, assuming this would be sufficient for any maintenance access. The Heritage Foundation would be consulted in any event.
- ~ It was felt by the meeting that we should amend plans to the maximum space we think we can afford as we can then reduce if budgets dictate. The advantage of this is we would not then have to re-apply for planning permission which would be necessary if we submit the smaller plans and then decide we have enough money to increase. No approach has yet been made to the Council.
- ~ Colin's advice would be to submit full planning application as the same cost as a pre-application.
- ~ Colin was congratulated on the design of the building.

3) **Finance** - *Ian Hunt, Chair, Finance Committee*

- ~ Ian advised that the monies raised from Growing in Faith had been earmarked for the Parish building project and local caritas.
- ~ Estimated costs for the building project are £140,000 for the build and £25,000 to furnish / equip.
- ~ Currently £185,000 cashflow. We should therefore just about afford without borrowing additional funds. However, Growing in Faith is a 5 year cycle so money can only be drawn down as funds come in. It would therefore be possible to have a bridging type loan from the Diocese with the monies to be repaid from GIF monies as they are drawn down.
- ~ We are currently in surplus but we will need to replenish funds over time.
- ~ Other works to be undertaken – the boiler in the Church needs to be replaced but it is hoped this will last another 2 years. The car park also will need to be resurfaced following completion of the project.

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Outcome / timescales

- ~ It was agreed that plans would be amended to whatever is felt feasible in order that they can be submitted on this basis.
- ~ In terms of timescales Colin advised it would take a couple of weeks to draw up new plans / planning application. The planning application will take approximately 8 weeks. In terms of tenders we can either wait until the response is received or we could go out after 4 weeks.
- ~ The Diocese only need to be involved in tenders over £500k but we are already working with them through Chris Fanning.
- ~ If all goes to plan we would hope to start build in October with estimated completion to be approximately 6 months.
- ~ It was asked if local contractors would be used and not those recommended by the Diocese. Colin advised that local contractors could be used but that in his experience the Diocesan contractors are usually very good value for money. They have thrown in wild cards in the past and they have always been competitive. If there is a particular local contractor that might be interested they could be added to the Diocese list.
- ~ All tenders are controlled by the Architect and the process is very open to scrutiny.

There being no further questions, Fr Jimmy closed the meeting with a prayer.

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Certified a true record by the Chair

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Date