

Prayer Garden Proposal

Introduction

The proposal for a prayer garden was an initiative from our Youth Group beginning in Spring 2021. This report informs the PPC on the key points of discussion by the Youth Group, a suggested garden layout schematic and costings information. Following early indication for the Youth Group to proceed to gather information for the proposal, we kept Fr Francis updated and looked for his input too. It was thought important that costings be obtained before the proposal for an informed update to the full PPC. Fr Francis, Eamon and then John, Maureen and Lizzie have been present at quotation site visits with potential contractors. Earlier this year, Fr Francis asked that location views were asked of the PPC. A survey monkey was sent and also a mention at a face-to-face Saturday meeting to gather views. A discussion of Fr Francis, Christine, Lizzie and Maureen in June concluded that the October PPC meeting would focus on the prayer garden proposal including quotation information given this initiative involved a significant sum from Parish funds.

The prayer gardens of St Marys (Redbourn), St Stephens (Watling View) and St Luke's (Cell Barnes Lane) have been visited.

nb: Recent photos taken by Christine are separately attached to the cover e mail.

The Garden Concept

The initial idea arose from a walk through the grounds of St Marys', Redbourn where messaging by the children was displayed. Sorry and thank you messages hung from the trees together with other themed messages endorsed on grouped pebbles. This gave a calm, reflective feel with a sense of personal thoughts shared in a closeness with the holy ground surrounding the church.

We already have the lawns and trees in place at St Barts to create such an area for prayer. The prayer garden to be available for all and encourage being an area where parent or grandparent would bring younger children for a short time of reflection and leaving their messages. If possible, the location to allow access for all who want to share quiet prayer not just our own parishioners.

It was then thought that our garden could incorporate some additional features to add to the experience of reflection ie: a small flag-stoned circle on which a decade of the rosary could be said, a base for a centre statue (marian) and a base on which to stand a movable altar where mass could be said (including young family masses). Planting to provide some colour across the year, to be environmentally friendly and straightforward in maintaining. Inclusion of an apple tree, holly tree, salvia, scented plants and Ionicera edging were suggested. Bringing these thoughts together took us to the garden schematic (attached) (nb: types of plants to be determined).

Quotations have been obtained to indicate the costing which would be involved. The finance committee have helpfully already given an initial indication that the quotation from Blessed Earth in delivering the full garden schematic is too expensive for the Parish to meet. Given the need to reduce the cost to the Parish, the work would now be envisaged to be in two stages:

1. Ground preparation and stone laying by contractors
2. Planting by parish. We can identify a small team to lead on this.

It is likely that the Finance Committee would still look for a portion of the costs to be raised from parishioners. With the benefit of this steer an expression of interest under £4000 for ground preparation, stoning work and fencing was invited from local companies. Unique Landscapes in response have responded with quote of £3915 if the front garden location including building up of the fence to add to privacy or additional £350 if the middle garden location include low fencing off down the centre of current garden area.

If there is support for the prayer garden proposal then the proposal will go forward for parishioners to decide if it should be proceeded with.

Key Points from Youth Group Discussions March-October 2021

Ideas of features etc:

1. Located area suggested to be at the front side of the Church. The garden could incorporate the Garden of Gethsamene, include small fruit tree, benches, walkway, rosary flagstones and themed trees for message (thank you, sorry and remembrance)
2. Garden of Gethsemane picture, statue of our lady, or alternatively 10 flagstones representing decade of the rosary. With Gethsemane theme could have an outdoor olive tree.
3. Could we use our outdoor crib casing for a garden of Gethsemane around Easter-time?
4. For the garden shrubs and flowers we can incorporate consciousness of scent, an olive tree (linking with Gethsamene, some plants in tubs. Plants should be types which can thrive outdoors. Apple or cherry tree. To include something evergreen Plants friendly to butterflies, bees and birds.

Concerns:

1. It is agreed that a prayer-garden would be a worthwhile spend bringing an additional spiritual element to St Barts but the cost is likely to be several thousand pounds-what is the sum of Parish funds (finance committee or appeal to parishioners) which is realistic for this initiative?
2. To consider measures to reduce risk of items which could be vandalised or stolen.
3. Low entrance hedges at the front lawn location may be a deterrent rather than the flat lawn
4. Need to avoid dripping sap shrubs and trees and water heavy plants.

Prayer Garden Location

There have been two suggestions on the garden location ie: the rear half of the front garden(to the right of the church) and half of the middle garden (half closest to the church building).

Following the monkey survey and discussion at the Saturday face to face meeting there are 6 of the Committee preferring front garden location and two the middle garden location.

Option 1-Front Garden Area

PROS	CONS
Readily accessible to all-not restricted to St Barts parishioners. Has an ecumenical element.	Noise from passing traffic especially Monday -Friday mornings and peak times (Suggested area is towards the rear of this grassed part so reduces noise a bit)
People can visit at anytime with access not needing any control.	Vandalism (Area is towards the rear of this grassed part so reduces risk)

Option 2-Middle Garden Area

PROS	CONS
Quieter, secluded area	Will reduce space for which the garden can be used for other purposes (about 50%). Suggested a low fence could divide the two sections of this grassed area.
Could use benches already in situ for prayer garden reflection	Vandalism which could have higher risk of damage ie: to sacristy area and perhaps into the church and into the hall and kitchen. Low dividing fence could deter. CCTV camera could deter.
	Will need some control for access to the prayer garden. Possibly a timer lock on the side door by which the garden will be entranced and times for this displayed and given in the newsletter/ on the website

Quotations

Blessed Earth December 2021 is separately attached to the proposal cover e mail. This gives a 3 options quotation of £6680/7555/10,700 which would cover delivery of the whole project.

Unique landscapes September 2022 quotation of £3915 (additional £350 if middle garden location) covers preparation of the ground/stone work/fencing. Details are:

Unique Landscapes-Quotation for paving for new prayer garden

Works carried out:

At first we bring in a digger and dig out 6 inches deep for the shape of the prayer garden. The waste will be removed into a skip .We then add a type 1 mot crushed concrete subbase and spread level and compact down firm with a compactor plate. We then add a membrane and then start to lay the new sandstone patio slabs .The slabs will be set on a strong sand and cement mix at a width of 1 meter with 8ml pointing gaps between them. We will so the same with the set squares at the edge of the path .We then will lay the prayer stones on a strong sand and cement mix at the peak of the design. We then add an easy joint compound to the pointing gaps and wood chip to complete the whole job.
We then add the batten screening along the fence to help with privacy.

Materials:

- 1 pack of Camel Indian sandstone
- 2 metres of sharp sand
- 10 bags of cement
- 1 roll of membrane
- 1 digger hire
- 1 8 yrd skip
- 2 tubs of East joint
- 2 ton of wood chip
- 250 of sandstone sets
- 4 bundles of batten
- 5 4b2
- 1 Big box of 2inch screws

Duration of job :

6 days work for 3 men

Total cost : £3915

If you had the prayer garden in the back garden it will be and extra £350 for the picket fence with labour included .

We do have public liability insurance and also we try to use as much recycled materials as possible. We also all fully vaccinated. If there's any questions with quote please ask many thanks mark

St Luke's Costings from Elaine Donald :

The landscaping cost about £20.000 .The company who did the earthwork was MJG Property Maintenance (Martin) of Harpenden mjgproperty@btinternet.com
Tel 07702 190277

MJG covered the soil with a membrane which we cut to enable us to plant .**(The cost of plants was additional)we then covered the planting area with a thick layer of bark.**

1. We did use Contractors,
2. Our contact at Ayletts was Jane who is the plant advisory member of staff. She drew up a detailed map and a list of suitable plants which we purchased from Ayletts.
Some of the lavenders died but they replaced them free of charge as all their plants are guaranteed.
3. **The seating bench was provided by a company called Fitzpatrick Woolmer Design & Publishing Ltd. My Sister ordered one for her church and the total cost including installation and the wording was £5,538.**
4. **Of course we did have a lot of extras like the swift boxes high up near the roof, the painting of the large tripod with the cross on top and the wording on the side of church.**

Blessed Earth Costing

Module	Lower End	Mid-Range	Higher End
Site Prep	£320.00	£320.00	£400.00
Labour	£3000.00	£3000.00	£3500.00
Design	£600.00	£600.00	£650.00
Planting: Hedges	£500.00	£900.00	£1400.00
Planting: Flowerbed	£300.00	£300.00	£380.00
Planting: Borders	£280.00	£280.00	£300.00
Screening	-	£320.00	£440.00
Paving	£530.00	£530.00	£640.00
Benches	£700.00	£855.00	£1470.00
Pedestal clean	£40.00	£40.00	£40.00
Top Soil	£410.00	£410.00	£600.00
Lighting	-	-	£280.00
Upcycle Marble	-	-	£600.00
Totals	£6680.00	£7555.00	£10700.00