

ST MARY THE VIRGIN – WEST MALLING
Minutes of the meeting of the PCC held in the Church Centre
on Tuesday 21st October 2014 at 8.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Revd. David Green (Chairman), Becky Clifford (Churchwarden), John Musker (Churchwarden), Lesley Bays (Treasurer), Denise McKeown (Secretary), Margaret Moore, Colin Bays, David Day, Isobel Macdonald, Anna Tunnicliff, Canon Alan Vousden, Rob Hancock, Andrew Mills, Christie Ransom & Leo Sharp.

4. Discussion item: Capital Project Feasibility Study

- 4.1. The Chairman presented paper 2014/10-WM01 previously circulated which outlined the outcome of the DAC Site Visit with English Heritage on 22 September 2014. A meeting had been held the previous evening with the sub-group. At this stage the DAC's views are not yet known but the general tone was positive.
- 4.2. The meeting had been attended by Claire Innes, Chartered Surveyor, Colin Smith, Chartered Surveyor & four residents from Churchfields, two of whom are members of the congregation. Claire and Colin had encouraged a meeting with TMBC. This would not be a formal pre-application meeting since such a meeting incurred a charge.
- 4.3. The Sub-Group had suggested that an article be placed in the Downsmail so that the residents and wider community were made aware of the Church Centre situation and possible extension. They felt that it had not been communicated adequately that we were considering a sale of the Church Centre and a major extension to the church building.
- 4.4. The Chairman explained that the Sub-Group felt that a feasibility study was now needed for the Church Centre and Claire Innes had said she felt this was something she could undertake.
- 4.5. Alan Vousden presented a case to sell the Church Centre now. After a lengthy discussion, the PCC agreed that it was not yet possible to make that decision until it was known how the DAC were going to advise us with regard to the possible extension for the church. It was noted that, even without regular tenants, the Church Centre continues to cost money in heating, lighting, insurance and cleaning.
- 4.6. The Chairman circulated a report from Bracketts Estate Agents dated 16th October 2014. Their report recommended obtaining planning permission for residential use since this would potentially increase the value of the building in a sale.
- 4.7. It was agreed that we would do some of our homework, even if we were not yet able to decide if we would sell it until the DAC had responded. Anna and others present were not ready to sell. The consensus of opinion was that a feasibility study should be undertaken and enquiries would be made in relation to planning permission for a change of use. The meeting was advised that DAC timescales can be lengthy.

Capital Project

DAC Site Visit with English Heritage, 22 September 2014

On September 22nd, representatives from the Diocesan Advisory Council (DAC) came to West Malling to look at the church and to discuss our options for the future of the church and a hoped-for extension to provide toilet facilities and other vital amenities. Tom Foxall, a representative from English Heritage and, Liz Guthrie, the Tree Officer from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council were also in attendance.

The meeting on September 22 was conducted in a good spirit. DAC representatives were not able to tell us what they thought 'officially'. We now need to wait for them to meet as a full Council (their next meeting is in October) and for their representatives who came along to report back to the Council and discuss the project with the Council.

Given the meeting with the DAC, one of the things that was clear was that the list of requirements for the church's new facilities or extension needs to be considered in more depth and detail. Subsequent to that meeting, I drew up a list of requirements for any church extension (as I see it) which was subsequently discussed with Isobel Macdonald, Alan Vousden and Colin Bays. That document is attached here for information and comment.

After the meeting with the DAC, English Heritage have fed their views back to the DAC already and they copied us into that correspondence (also attached with this paper). We anticipate that the DAC will write to St Mary's PCC to let us know their thoughts in due course. They said to bear with them as they are very busy, so correspondence may not be very swift. We aren't expecting any letter before November at the earliest.

In the meantime, Isobel Macdonald was asked to convene a meeting of the PCC's 'Sub-Group' to talk about the next stage, so that we are ready when we receive the DAC's response. This group will meet on the Monday before our next PCC meeting and so we'll update you after that meeting takes place when we gather on Tuesday night.

David Green
19 October 2014

St Mary's, West Malling

Building requirements

What do we need?

A main hall capable of hosting 250 people standing up and whatever the equivalent ratio would be for people to be seated around tables.

The main hall needs facilities to 'shorten' the room for smaller gatherings.

Toilets for men, women and the disabled. Big enough to cope with a 15 minute interval in a music concert attended by 250 people.

Refreshment facilities. These facilities need to be capable of making tea/coffee and serving cakes or a light buffet. It is not envisaged as a full kitchen in which the cooking of a meal would take place.

Meeting rooms (for Sunday School)

Enough ancillary rooms for at least two children's groups to meet. The rooms would need to be flexible enough for a variety of uses even if the children are regular users each Sunday. Suggested capacities of 10 and 20.

A creche area in church could be formalised, preferably with sound loop providing audio and possibly video from the main worship space, preferably with soundproof glass front so parents can see the worship.

Seating and tables for the hall needs a separate **storage area**, preferably accessible from the main hall, for when they're not used.

Plenty of **further storage** (for church equipment and resources, children's resources, toddler group and other community group storage).

A **Narthex area** in the new Church Centre big enough to include a Reception and Space for meeting and greeting which can be accessed without having to go through the church. i.e. a separate front door.

Running off the Narthex, **office space for exclusive church use** including space for three people to work, filing cabinet space and a site for the photocopier and collator machinery.

Boiler room is presumably needed.

We would hope to set a **high standard for the use of renewable energy**, with good insulation, and other ecologically friendly features.