

**OPTION APPRAISAL**  
**ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WEST MALLING**  
**and**  
**ST MARY'S CHURCH CENTRE**

*Working Document*

The existing Church Centre was built in the mid-nineteenth century (main part is dated at 1846) as a Church of England Primary School for West Malling and consisted of:

- kitchen area
- four classrooms
- a second floor "caretaker's" flat
- outside toilets (added at a later date)
- store room

Total floor area is approximately 2,904 sq.m./3,170 sq.ft)

The building ceased being used as a Church Primary School in the mid-20th century when the School relocated to its current site in Norman Road, West Malling. The building later was purchased by the Church and became 'The Church Centre'. It has been used by a number of local groups, but the main rental income came from the regular tenant, the Betty Lewis Pre-School Nursery.

The Nursery vacated the premises in July 2014 as they have relocated to West Malling Primary School.

Unfortunately this leaves the Church Centre unoccupied for the majority of the time, just being used by the Sunday School, Mothers' Union (monthly meeting), PCC (monthly meeting) and occasionally for party bookings and miscellaneous events.

Due to its age and construction the existing building is costly to run and after years of insufficient funding is in a considerable state of disrepair. It has already been acknowledged by all, including the Diocese of Rochester that the building is "beyond economic repair".

Even if it was refurbished the existing layout is unsuitable for the current requirements of a modern day Church Centre, and indeed many potential income sources, and, as it is detached and located a short distance from the Church this further limits its potential use by the Church and affiliated groups.

With increasing financial pressures on all establishments, the Church is not alone in having to look at ways of improving its income stream to meet ever rising costs. A multi-functional Church Centre is one such opportunity, as well as providing the opportunity for the Church to attract more user groups to use and benefit from its facilities.

**Wish List for Church Centre:**

- 250 person meeting hall ( standing; 120 seated); flexibility to reduce size of space and/or divide into two/three
- Toilets - male; female; disabled; baby change
- Kitchen facilities - for hot and cold drinks and light refreshments (not full cooking facilities)
- Two additional Meeting Rooms - to accommodate 10-20 people each
- Storage facilities - tables and chairs; Church equipments; resources
- Independent access and reception area
- Direct internal link to Church
- Boiler room and services
- Church Office - to serve up to three people; equipment (photocopier; filing cabinets; collator etc)

**Additional Facilities in the Church:**

- Crèche area - sound proof glass with sound/ audio loop

**Temporary Facilities required if Church Centre vacated:**

- Meeting Room
- Toilets
- Sunday School
- Storage

**Options for temporary facilities**

- Within the Church
- Port-a-loos
- The Vicarage

**Options:**

- **Option 1 – Do Nothing**
  - By “Do Nothing” we mean literally that we keep running costs as low as possible and try our best to keep the main fabric of the building wind and water tight.
  - Because of the poor condition of both the fabric of the existing building and the age of its fittings, it really is not worth spending any significant sums of money on anything other than absolutely essential repairs and certainly not on improvements
  - Its detached location, at some distance from the Church is a considerable disadvantage to potential Church uses
  - Both its layout and total lack of parking provision, other than on the public highway, make it of limited appeal to other non Church potential income streams

▪ **Option 2 – Refurbish Existing Centre**

- To refurbish the existing Church Centre would cost a considerable sum due to the poor state of repair of both the fabric of the building and the age of its services
- Very approximate estimates are in the region of £250,000
- Furthermore the existing Centre has limitations on its use due to the internal layout, location, access and no on-site parking making it less attractive than other available facilities in the local area
- Annual running costs we have estimated at £5,000 per annum assuming an increase in useage therefore an increase in costs
- To secure financial stability a Sinking Fund should be set up to cover major repairs and maintenance - £3,500 is a conservative estimate; this would only add up to £7,000 plus interest within the first five years when some expenditure is likely to be required
- Potential income streams would need to be identified to:
  - Finance the initial costs of refurbishment
  - Fund the annual running costs
  - Fund the provision of a sinking fund

▪ **Option 3 – Sell Existing Centre and Build New Church Centre linked to St Mary’s**

- Because of the speculation on possible alternative uses for the existing building, the most likely being conversion to residential there is a wide range of site values
- When seeking advice on current site value it is acknowledged that this is “totally dependant upon its planning potential” but the suggested range is £300,000 to £500,000
- New build costs – rough estimate of £500,000 - £1,000,000 depending upon size and specification
- Running costs – at least as much as refurbished Church Centre but could be more depending on frequency of use. It would benefit from better energy efficiency than the existing Church Centre.
- Sinking Fund – estimated at £5,000 per annum
- Potential income streams would need to be identified to:
  - Finance the initial costs of building beyond the funds raised by the sale of the existing Church Centre
  - Fund the annual running costs
  - Fund the provision of a sinking fund

	<b>Option 1</b> Do Nothing	<b>Option 2</b> Refurbish Existing Centre	<b>Option 3</b> Sell Existing Centre and Build New Extension
Floorspace	2,904 sq.m 3,170 sq.ft		140 sq.m. 1,500 sq.ft
Estimated Annual Running Costs per annum			
▪ Gas (standing charge plus VAT)	£226		
▪ Electricity (standing charge plus VAT)			
▪ Water (standing charge)	£76		
▪ Rates			
▪ Insurance			
▪ Minor repairs	£74		
	£0		
	£2,500		
	£600		
Costs per Annum	£3,476	£5,000	£5,000 - £7,500
Annual Sinking Fund for Major Repairs/ Maintenance		£3,500	£5,000
Refurbishment Costs		£250,000	
New Build Costs			£500,000 to £1,000,000
User Groups	Sunday School PCC Mothers Union		

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