

**Resumé of the Open Meeting of the Parish held on Wednesday 20th
July 2011 held in Holy Family Church at 8 pm**

IMPORTANT – We would like to apologise that subsequent to the Open Meeting, we established that the information given in respect of the *comparative* measurements of the current hall and the proposed hall were incorrect.

Existing halls = 141 sq m gross	Proposed Main Hall -	150 sq m
	Meeting Room -	<u>24 sq m</u>
		174 sq m

The meeting room will have a moveable partition which can be used to enlarge the main hall area for large functions

In addition to a larger hall, provision has been made for a separate Chair/Equipment store of 12 sq m.

The Kitchen is twice the size of the existing kitchen, the toilet areas total 30.6 sq m, against the existing 9.2 sq m and now include a disabled toilet.

We had always proposed to provide larger accommodation in the new Parish Centre and are very sorry that you were misinformed about the size of the current halls at the meeting.

Resumé of Meeting

Introduction

Brian Morrish the Chairman of the Parish Development Committee opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. Fr Charles then led us with a prayer.

Brian said that the purpose of the meeting was to fulfil a promise made by Fr Laurence to present the proposals for the new church hall at the earliest opportunity. In view of the unusual circumstances our Bishop, Kieran, was going to join us, but as he was attending the funeral of Bishop Michael Evans of East Anglia, he imagined he was still on his way to our meeting. *(In fact the Bishop never reached the meeting.)*

Brian introduced our architect, Roger Jones, who would take us through the Presentation. He had hoped to also introduce Paul Grinham, our Project Manager for both of our Projects, but his father is gravely ill. He introduced two of our representatives for Reigate on the Parish Development Committee, namely Bernard Monaghan and Stuart Ferma, our third member Jill O'Reilly is currently on holiday.

Brian then introduced himself and explained that he had been appointed as Chairman of the Committee following the sad death of Peter Connolly.

Brian said following his appointment he had listened to the comments of the last meeting. His first action had been to terminate our contract with the previous architect and instead appointed Tomei and Mackley, who are based locally and are acting on our Redhill Project. They have many projects locally and Brian was confident that their plans would be more acceptable.

Presentation – Introduction

Roger Jones, our architect, assisted by his Power Point screen Presentation then explained that the reasons for the change of architect had very much been influenced by his experience with the local Planning Authority and how they saw residential development and his extensive work for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

Roger explained that we have still to agree the principle for the residential development with the Planning Department. They had welcomed and agreed our design for the Parish Hall. He was hoping the overall Planning Application will be submitted to the Council in August, probably with a 13 week planning period. This would then progress to the detailed design of the Parish Hall. The sale of the land was a separate issue being dealt with by a local valuer.

For the proposed development the **Consultant Team** consisted of Paul Grinham of Synergy, our Project Manager, Architects Tomei and Mackley, Robert Buckley, Quantity Surveyor of Synergy, Structural Engineer Michael Weaver of Scott White and Hookins, Wendy Warren of Carnel Warren Associates, M & E Service Consultant, Kas Hart of Synergy as CDM Coordinator and Crow Watkin, whose Martin Seymour had undertaken the initial valuation of the proposed residential site. (He commented the disciplines of the Synergy personnel were completely separate.)

Development Programme

Roger explained that Planning Permission had already been obtained for the Redhill Project, this was now being followed by the marketing of the site. Hopefully the site sale for Reigate would be completed by February 2012, with Construction commencing in June 2012 and Completion in April 2013.

A water colour view of the proposed development was shown on the screen, followed by a Site Plan of the Development. Roger said that large versions of this were displayed elsewhere in the church. He explained the colours that represented different parts of the plan.

The residential area represents 14 flats for private sale. Roger explained that affordable housing devalued a site and it was considered difficult to manage combined housing.

The residential flats have self-contained parking spaces (14) located at the back of the church leading directly onto Yorke Road. The reason for placing the parking in this

area was so that residents would use the pavement in Yorke Road, to prevent them walking across the church land.

Some car parking on our site was leased some time ago to Xerox Pension Fund, and we have to respect this, however, we are endeavouring to relocate some of these spaces. On the plan we now have some additional parking spaces to the side of the proposed hall.

Perspective with the proposed link and proposed hall

Roger explained that the hall was all single storey joining to the church at the Narthex, so that before and after services people can travel under cover to the new hall. The entrance steps and wheelchair access is fully DTA accessible.

Views were shown of the existing elevation, followed by the elevation with the new centre and a detailed floor plan. The detailed plan shows a link straight through a corridor area, toilets and a repository space in the new building. In the new build there is also a chair/equipment store, boiler room, parish office, separate meeting and separate kitchen. Everything leads into the main hall. There is also above ceiling storage for special users with a robust hatch.

The new hall is 150 sq m for 290/300 seats and 133 diners. Between the hall and the church there is a paved courtyard for outdoor activities with access down a ramp.

Residential Property

A view was shown of 3 different elevations for the proposed flats, which Roger said he was still discussing with the planners, the latest design being the one with the flat roof and balconies. He was currently awaiting their comments.

Construction Costs and Budget

Roger Jones outlined the construction costs and showed the budget for the two projects in Redhill and Reigate. This showed a potential deficit of £202,711 for which fundraising would be needed. This was subject to sale proceeds and construction costs being as budgeted.

Brian thanked Roger for his Presentation and opened the Meeting to the Questions from the Floor

Open Forum

Questions and answers from the floor covered a wide range of topics and included:-

A question was raised on why we were demolishing the Presbytery. Roger explained that we have to take the note of the recommendations of the Planning Authorities and they took the same view as himself that if we did not demolish it we would inhibit the site for its future development. Brian added that 2 years ago we have become one

parish of The Nativity of the Lord and due to lack of priests had no requirement for the Presbytery. We did, however, have 3 churches within a radius of 3 miles.

The size of the proposed hall was the major concern for a number of people. In general most people praised the design of the new hall and comments included congratulations for incorporating in the present plans the concerns about the design made at the previous Open Meeting. Roger elaborated on the difference between the old and new. The current hall totals 180¹ sq m, being made up of 2 areas 110 sq m and 70 sq m. In the proposed development the large hall is 150 sq m plus the meeting room (24 sq m) and the offices. He believed this covered the activities we wanted giving seating for 300 and 133 for dining.

Comments were made about the height of the residential development. Roger explained that there was a 2.4 metre brick wall between us and the flats which would be screened by planting. On being questioned about the possible noise from these flats, Roger did not believe there would be a problem, as he had not encountered it with similar developments, he thought noise would more likely come from the communal garden.

The arrangement for the parking of the residents' cars behind the church was queried. Roger explained that we would probably have to install a barrier to the church car park. The residents' car park would be solely for them and it was not unusual for people to have to walk to a car park.

The positioning of the hall was questioned by another parishioner who asked if Roger had considered demolishing the Sacristy and placing it behind the main altar, so the hall could be placed nearer to the Church. Roger said he had considered this, but it would have affected the windows on that side of the church, might have involved problems due to the proximity to local housing and would have involved complications with VAT.

The fact that the favoured option for the residential flats seemed to be a flat roof was queried. Roger explained that the Planning Officer had referred him to an Appeal Decision regarding the demolition of Penne Cottage (in Yorke Road, opposite the current church hall) where they lost at Appeal and refused a design for a pitched roof. The Planning Officer, Andrew Benson had referred him to a development round the corner which was a modern looking building which he thought we should emulate. Currently Roger said he was continuing to discuss the matter with the Planning Officer.

The audience expressed a variety of opinions from being unhappy with the whole idea and liking the plans and fully supporting them. Another parishioner did not share the view about the lack of priests and thought we should not sell the silver but dispose of the residential site on a long lease. Roger replied that the disposal of church property either as freehold or leasehold was currently being reviewed by the Diocese. The downside of disposing of the property leasehold was that tenants could force a right to buy.

¹ Please see comments at the front of these Minutes

The cost of the professional fees was queried and it was asked if Roger considered this sum competitive. Roger explained that we have substantially reduced fees from him, because he has actually reimbursed our fees on the previous project he did under Father Daryl. He felt we have a tight and very competitive package which has to include many disciplines now required by the CDM, such as mechanical, electrical and structural engineers and specialist surveys, and these all count as Professional Fees. A major portion of these fees are spent prior to construction, probably 70%.

Concern was expressed that we might be left with no hall in the end. Brian explained that the Planning Permission for Redhill did not allow us to demolish the old hall until we have signed contracts for the building of the new hall. He realised we had a short term problem, but it was for a long term gain for the future 30-40 years. There was still the albeit small Merstham hall, but for a period the Reigate hall would still be available. Plans for a new hall in Redhill had been ongoing since 1994 and he wished to take things forward.

Brian said that although it had been said previously at the Open Meeting that it was planned to build the new hall in Redhill before the old one was demolished, this was now considered unlikely. We had hoped we could sell the land and then lease it back at a cheap rent for a short period whilst the centre was being built. However, we have been advised we really need to offer vacant possession. There is still a chance this might happen and the purchasers of the site might use our site as a *land bank* and develop it in the future, in which case we would have to negotiate. Meanwhile we had had to give notice to tenants.

Concerns were expressed about the orientation of the flats and their height. Also queried was whether the green area could be moved to in front of the church. Roger explained that when planning the Residential Development he had opted for flats rather than houses, as there is a huge demand for flats in Reigate. He said the Planners had wished to maintain a green area facing Yorke Road. Roger also explained why the flats and balconies needed to be orientated N & S.

In reply to a question concerning access to the paved area between the hall and church Roger explained that apart from the wheelchair useable ramp there would be steps leading from the hall directly into this area.

Several questions were raised on whether the old hall could be refurbished and the cost of this exercise. Brian said that in terms of refurbishment he had been told this had been examined previously and found to be uneconomic.

The green credentials for the building and its use of renewable energy was questioned. Roger said the local Council did not require us to use renewable energy, but the building is fully insulated and the water will be heated by solar panels.

In view of the possible noise from the residential building someone thought it was in an ideal situation to age restrict it. Roger explained that we were constrained for a number of reasons which included obtaining the best value for the land and age *restriction* would devalue this and the internal structure would need to be configured differently to accommodate wheelchairs etc.

Concern was expressed that the flats were rather close to the church and looking like an office block. The questioner thought that leasing the site would not adversely affect the capital value of the land and would enable the church to retain more control of the site through covenants. Roger thought that restrictive covenants would have a devaluing effect.

A number of parishioners thought the hall on the small side and wondered what the cost of increasing the size of the main hall from 150sq m to 180 sq m would be.

Brian Morrish said that there had been interesting and different views and some questions needed answering such as the size of the hall. He was part of a committee of lay people trying to do the best for the parish. We had tried to take on board the previous comments and he felt we now have an attractive scheme.

In response to a question concerning the monthly fund raising for the Project, Brian said these sum of £2300 a month had been included in the figures to May. He thought we should revisit this source of income and encourage others to join.

Some people questioned the process of how we decided what should happen in the Parish and wished to keep things as they are. Others thought that previously a vote was taken when the outline plans were shown and gave their general encouragement. There is some anxiety about the size of the hall and someone wondered if we could increase our fund raising from £200,000 to £250,000/£300,000. Brian responded that we had 2 parcels of land and the construction costs are estimates, as we have not been out to tender, so there could be a substantial difference. There could also be a big discrepancy in the value of the land, if the estate agent have undervalued/overvalued them. It was difficult at this stage to know, but by the end of July/beginning of August we should know the value of the land in Redhill.

Brian said he had written to the new Moderator, Fr Chris Spain, and asked if he wanted to be kept informed. Fr Chris had joined Brian and had attended the Diocesan Finance meeting and Brian had made him fully aware of what we are trying to do, so he felt sure we were going to have his support.

Resume of the Open Meeting 20711- 2