

St Winefride's Parish Assembly
Minutes of meetings, 17th & 18th September 2016, held in the Parish Hall

Present: Fr. Tom, Marian Conran, Teresa Chance, Albert Demargne, Oona Stannard, Juliet Thompson

Attendance: About 100 Parishioners in total (Including Parish Co-ordinating Committee members)

Assemblies

This year the Parish Assembly was held as a series of small and informal sessions after each of the weekend Masses. The ambition was to offer a broader range of Parishioners the opportunity to take part, and contribute their suggestions and comments. Overall, this appears to have been success, with around 100 Parishioners attending the sessions, a threefold increase relative to previous years.

A wealth of comments were heard and notes taken as well as people prioritising their concerns on the draft initial estate plan (see section below). Whatever decisions Father Tom and the parish make there will be a need for people to help in implementing plans. Please do continue to think about these matters, including what help you could offer, and do still feel able to talk to members of the committee or to write via the parish office.

Discussions

Although there was a wide range of views there were some on which it seems that there was apparent consensus. Those relating to the items on the draft Estate plan are summarised in the relevant section below.

There were a number of items which Parishioners felt were interrelated and difficult to progress in isolation. The issue of the tree of heaven evidently has a bearing on the garden wall, on landscaping the front of the Church, and by extension on resurfacing the side passages and on disabled access. The need for better disabled access itself was a constant in many of the items and priorities discussed.

If there are to be developments beyond the regular maintenance and repairs to the Church (such as the replacement of boilers, which is expected to happen in the near future), there are likely to be significant fundraising implications for the parish. Our reserves are "healthy" but would not be able to cover all the works regarding, for example, landscaping and improvements to the hall. On the whole, Parishioners expressed the feeling that they would support such a fund-raising campaign.

Other items raised were the need for a property committee and for better communication with Parishioners (through the Newsletter), for example to keep them informed of practical developments to the Church estate, which in turn might allow them to contribute better.

Parish Estate Survey

Parishioners were asked to rank the various estate tasks in the order of priority they would attribute to them. 26 Parishioners completed surveys, and of these the vast majority were "processable". The resulting rankings are shown in the table on the following page.

Fixing the sound system / acoustics was voted (overwhelmingly) as the issue with the highest priority: Parishioners should be able to hear the Word reliably at Mass.

Providing proper disabled access and addressing the landscaping of the front of the Church including the garden wall were effectively tied in 2nd place. These are both very practical issues as well as aesthetic ones – with a number of Parishioners feeling that the appearance of the front of the Church and the garden wall was unacceptable: “it looks like a slum”. There was agreement that action must be taken as soon as possible, whether this is removal of the tree of heaven or new landscaping to contain it, and improvements made to the overall appearance and safety of the area. Father Tom was clear that he will take the case for removal of the tree to the Secretary of State if need be.

Enlarging and reconfiguring the Hall kitchen came 4th, with some Parishioners expressing concern that the Kitchen as it is currently laid out and used could be more hygienic. It was noted that those working in the kitchen, therefore, undertake much extra work to ensure that its use does typically meet minimum standards.

5th came the Church boiler (which is already being addressed) and 6th fixing the Church roof and leaded top windows. Re-decorating the Church was deemed to have comparatively low priority, as did fixing the Hall passage paving (probably addressed through landscaping anyway).

Actions

As an immediate result of Assembly discussions a small working group of volunteers has already been formed to look into the matter of the sound system as a matter of priority.

Quotes for the replacement of the Church boiler have been obtained and a decision is imminent as to when and how to proceed with this. It is likely that this will include the provision of two new boilers of sufficient rating to provide a degree of redundancy and to enable the hall to be connected in due course.

The application to have the Tree of heaven removed is progressing to further review.

A. Demargne

Oct 2016

Parish Estate Survey Results

Ranking / (%points)	Item	Category	Notes
1 (23%)	Acoustics	Improvements	Sound baffles around back & organ – unclear how effective?
2 (18%)	Disabled access & landscaping	Improvements	Current side access ramp is poor. Possibly unify garden with area to the side and front of Church.
3 (18%)	Garden wall	Fix / Bring to standard	Depends on progress on tree of heaven. Tell-tale installed to monitor movement.
4 (16%)	Hall kitchen	Improvements	Upgrade & reconfigure – currently unhygienic
5 (11%)	Church boiler & Radiators	Improvements	Inefficient (installed 1980). Gas fired. Replace with 2 tandem units? Flush (chemical) sludge out of system?
6 (5%)	Church roof & leaded top windows	Maintenance	Bernard Bishop report (2015): no urgency but needs general refurb. Sealing of cracks & gaps, fixing of loose ridge tiles, locks missing....etc
7 (3%)	Hall & side-passage redevelopment – long term plan	Improvements	There is a range of opinions on this.
8 (3%)	Landscaping	Improvements	Possibly unify garden with area to the side and front of Church
9 (1%)	Re-decorate Church	Maintenance	Last done in 1998
10 (1%)	Hall passage paving	Maintenance	Uneven – redo
11 (0.6%)	Disabled toilet alarm	Fix / Bring to standard	Health & Safety Executive (HSE) report (2016): would be needed
12 (0.4%)	Circuit breakers	Fix / Bring to standard	HSE report (2016): no longer up to std. Could be upgraded
0	Side driveway	Maintenance	Uneven – needs resurfacing, but question of drainage; soakaways not emptying -connect to drains?
0	Presbytery	Maintenance	Possibly re-decorate No.1 and refurbish the back room for Prayer
0	Lady Chapel windows	Improvements	Replace polycarbonate windows
0	Hall lighting	Improvements	Replace halogens with high efficiency LEDs
0	Safety lighting	Fix / Bring to standard	HSE report (2016): needed in Church and Hall