

ST MARY THE VIRGIN GODMANCHESTER TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

PROJECT REVIEW OCTOBER 2019

INTRODUCTION

This paper summarises the various phases of the Church Transformation Project to the end of October 2019 to provide a record of the work done and decisions made. It includes the information briefed to the PCC and to the Annual Church Meetings in April 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Annex A (not yet completed) provides a record of all relevant documents.

THE PROJECT DRIVERS

- The acute lack of facilities for present-day worship and community activities.
- The money saved by our predecessors for church development had decreased in value over the years as costs rise.
- We spend a significant amount of money heating the church for small congregations on several occasions each week. (our current oil payment is £400 per month and I have just paid an additional £561 to balance our account for the last 12 months.
- While on holiday we visited Norton St Philip church where they had recently installed an award winning 'pod' to meet their demands for modern facilities that included a parish office, toilet, tea station and meeting room. This seemed to be an ideal solution for St Mary's



Tea Station



Parish Office



Meeting Room

Norton St Philip Pod

INITIAL ACTIONS

To develop these ideas a small group met to see how we could develop our church buildings to meet these aims. This group was formalised by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) in January 2015 with the aim of producing recommendations to the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2015. A member of the group was asked to liaise with the town planning group for the town development to ensure that we are involved in the Godmanchester Town Plan.

REFERENCES

The group drew heavily on the considerable amount of work done by the Mission Action Plan Lent Group Buildings Committee from 2009 and the drawings produced by the church architect in January 2002 that reflect earlier proposals for the development of the west end of the church.

POTENTIAL USES (HALL AND CHURCH)

Regular Worship

Sunday and weekday services

Baptisms (both within and outside regular services), weddings and funerals

Special services with particularly large congregations e.g. Civic Service

Parish Office

Social Activities

Concerts

Christmas Bazaar

Summer Fete (when wet!)

Flower and church festivals

Town events e.g. GMC Town Show, Porch Museum presentations

Educational and business use

Formal school visits

Exhibition space

Casual visits for tourists visiting GMC

Meeting area for small groups

Church hall

Lettings e.g. pre-school nursery, GMC Garden Club, Rangers meetings

Children's Church

Church Youth Group

Church choir practices

Social events including parish lunches and other meals

REQUIREMENTS

Warm, comfortable and welcoming church with flexible seating to maximise church use.

Facilities for the choir and flower guild.

Enough storage facilities for staging etc.

Small meeting room (up to say 20 people).

Parish office (document storage and seating for say 6 plus copier etc.).

Facilities for concerts, presentations etc.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

We determined that:

- The project required a good statement of need and a strong case for funding including a proven value to the community and long-term financial viability.
- It would be important to identify benefits to skills training and employment e.g. craftsmen in wood, stone, etc.
- We needed to make sure that we examined any barriers that could prevent the project being completed and operated effectively and also be financially viable in the future.

EARLY RESEARCH

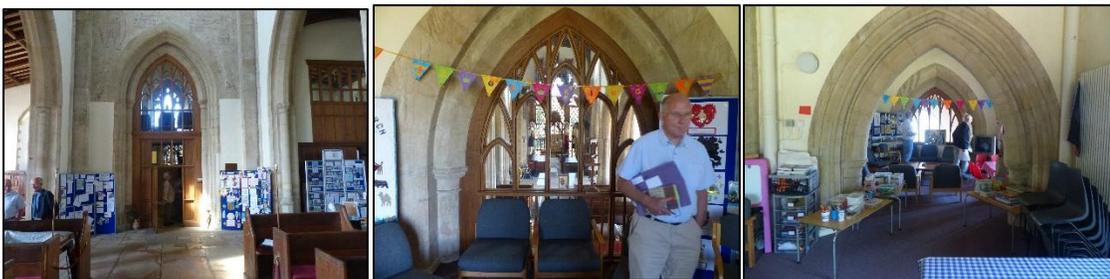
The requirements went through many iterations until we agreed on a list of requirements including toilets, facilities for making hot drinks, a parish office and a choir vestry and meeting room, all capable of being heated independently, and also the replacement of the pews with high quality chairs on a level, heated stone floor.

We also looked at the possible replacement of the church hall, tied in with the development of the vicarage garden, but we have not been able to progress that suggestion so the hall will have to continue to serve us.

We had inputs from various sources including recent drawings from our church architect and some useful drawings from Don Harris, a retired architect from our congregation. John Dillistone suggested including moving the organ to the west end and subsequently submitted different proposals to the PCC and Development Group. It was agreed that moving the organ to the west end would not form part of the project because of the additional expense and unsuitability of the current organ loft area for a meeting room etc.

While the initial work was ongoing we visited as many churches as possible that had developed the building, removed pews or fitted glass doors to the west end. These were:

- St Peter's Yaxley where a series of 10-year projects had provided a kitchen area and in the tower area and an additional room above the existing vestry and tower area at the rear of the church and improved heating.



Entrance to toilet and kitchen

Upper meeting room

- St Peter's Church Oundle had removed the pews, fitted warm air heating under the nave, built a dedicated storage room and various other improvements including stunning automatic glass doors and a glassed-in chapel. The church is used most days of the week for all manner of activities.



West end and pews

South door

Self-contained chapel

- St Paul's Church Bedford is a large church where the pews had all been removed and offices and a kitchen built across the rear of the church with additional seating above.



West end development & upper floor

Meeting room

Servery & kitchen

- St James Little Paxton where all the pews have been removed, under floor heating installed, a vestry and additional facilities for the ringers installed in the tower area and a kitchen area built in the south porch. They raised £400,000 without going to the Lottery fund.



- Holy Trinity Haddenham installed a large office with mainly glass surrounds in their north aisle in 2001.



- St Peter and St Pauls Alconbury were in the process of building an extension outside their north porch to house a toilet, kitchen and disabled access. They were also planning to erect a glass clad room in their NW corner with underfloor heating to use for meetings and eventually a café.
- We looked glass doors at the west end of St John’s Church Peterborough, Peterborough Cathedral and Ripon Cathedral to get some idea of the options available.
- We also consulted the churchwarden at Cottenham about the removal of their pews and where some serious negotiation was required. they finally ended up with a submission to a consistory court to find a solution. They were in the process of a revised application for approval.

As part of our enquiries to provide a warm environment we looked at various heating options as we wished to include under floor heating in at least part of the church. We discussed the pros and cons of ground sourced heat pumps and solar panels and had a meeting with the director of the firm than manages our boiler to seek his opinion on the best use of the existing heating and the most effective way of heating the new offices.

Having produced a rough idea of what we required we invited Jane Logan, secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches to seek her advice on what would be readily acceptable and where we may have difficulties in obtaining approval.

Her feeling was that we would have an easier time if we concentrated our building in the north aisle and tower area so as not to spoil the vista of the nave and that we may we have some problems getting agreement to remove the pews although nothing is impossible.

By this time we felt that we had enough information to brief an architect and we had previously contacted Jane Logan, secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches asking for recommendations of suitable architects and she had suggested three.

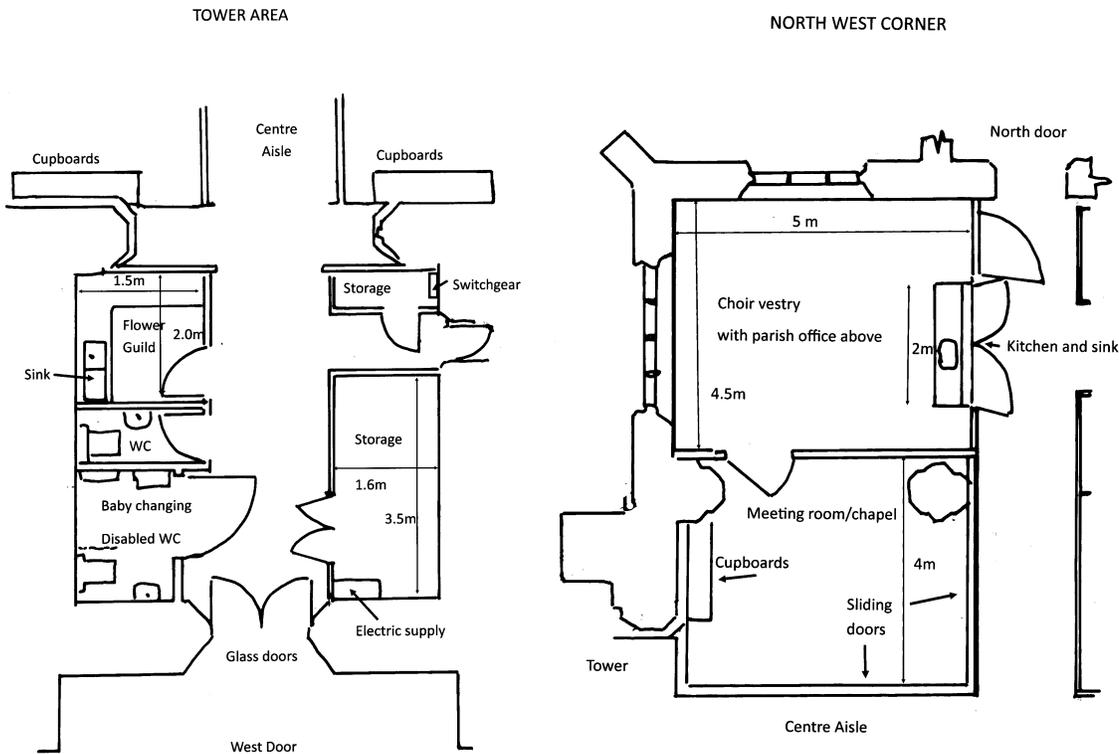
We contacted another architect suggested by one of our group but she felt that she was not able to help us with the specialist work required.

We discussed the project with our church architect, Mr Limentani who advised that he is retiring in 2016 so declined the work but offered to help with initial plans and recommended Oliver Caroe’s practice. He also produced isometric sketches of our original proposals for offices at the west end of the nave.

INITIAL PROPOSALS

Having produced a rough idea of what we required we invited Jane Logan to visit us to seek her advice on what would be readily acceptable and where we may have difficulties in obtaining approval. Her feeling was that we would have an easier time if we concentrated our building in the north aisle and tower area so as not to spoil the vista of the nave and that we may we have some problems getting agreement to remove the pews although nothing is impossible.

The two drawings below were our initial ideas on possible layouts for the tower area and the NW corner.



Initial Proposals

At this stage we decided that it was time to brief an architect to develop our initial ideas and after discussing the project with three architects we recommended to the PCC that they accept Caroe Architecture as our architect and the expenditure for their work from the Development Fund. This was agreed by an extraordinary meeting of the PCC and Caroe were advised of the decision and Suzi Pendlebury was appointed our project architect

A response from Caroe Architecture proposed work up to the development of an approved Concept Design (RIBA Stage 3) up to and including obtaining approval from the relevant bodies (DAC, English Heritage etc.). They also proposed, as a prelude to their design work, a digital laser survey of the whole church. As well as forming the basis of their design this would provide a very accurate 3D image of the church internally and

externally as a historical record and also the basis for any further work. This was discussed with the survey company who confirmed that this was the minimum required for the project.



One of the composite images from the digital survey

That work was completed in June 2016. In parallel with this work the Development Group worked with the architects to develop a comprehensive Statement of Significance of the church building, a Statement of Need as the justifications for the proposed work and an Impact Statement that reflects the effect that the proposed development would have on the church liturgically, pastorally and financially and how we could draw new groups into the life of the church. That work is almost complete.

In July 2016 Caroe Architecture produced three options based on our requirements for new facilities. These were:

Option 1 – New chapel / choir vestry/ meeting room to the NW with a parish office to the south of the main aisle

Option 2 - New chapel / choir vestry / meeting room to the West centred on the main aisle.

Option 3 – New tower mezzanine and limited construction on the church floor

In each case the tower area would be developed to provide toilets, a sink for the Flower Guild and storage facilities. The pews would be removed to provide flexible and more comfortable seating. The plans also included an 'airlock' in the south porch to retain the heat.

Having discussed the proposals at length and measured out the floor plans of the various drawings the Development Group decided that they did not provide a complete answer to our requirements and we were concerned that the proposed developments would provide insufficient space for each requirement e.g. a combine chapel/choir vestry would meet neither requirement completely. These concerns were discussed with our architect at a meeting in September and further design work was promised. A new set of drawings

was received early in 2017 and these proved to provide a complete answer to our requirements with a bonus of added space made available in the tower area. This proposal was:

Toilets, storage and a sink area for the Flower Guild in the tower ground floor area with glass doors to replace the inner wooden doors. A meeting room/winter chapel with folding doors into the nave in the area immediately outside the current tower doors. This would include a tea station and storage facilities. A dedicated choir vestry to the north of the meeting area and a parish office to the south of the meeting area up to the last set of pillars. This would leave the SW corner of the nave for christenings as at present and a children's area with proper storage facilities. In addition, there would be an additional room and balcony above the meeting room and tower room accessible through the bricked-up door in the staircase to the ringing chamber. Initial proposal to put an additional floor in the tower had been rejected because of the problems associated with providing both disabled access and a staircase.

The new proposal provides all our requirements at ground level with the added bonus of the upper floor which will be available whenever appropriate. This proposal was put to a building inspector who agreed that as we would be providing appropriate facilities at ground level with the upper floor as a non-essential option it was acceptable to have the single access.

On the 30th March 2017 representatives from the Development group together with the Director of Caroe Architecture and our project architect met with Geoffrey Hunter, Church Buildings Consultant for the Diocese of Ely, for an initial discussion in advance of the consideration of the project by the DAC at their April meeting. While Geoffrey was not in a position to approve or disapprove of the project, he was positive although he did point out that approval for the removal of the pews was unlikely to be straightforward.

While waiting for the feedback from the DAC we had a meeting with Matthew Langdon, a professional fundraiser, and briefed him on our project. Although he was very enthusiastic at the time we have not managed to make contact with him or his colleague again. We are exploring other options.

We were also in discussion with the Porch Museum over their use of the upper floor in the tower area as a permanent display area.

On the 7 June 2017 we had a very positive meeting with representatives from the DAC who suggested that:

- The use of the stone stairway in the tower as the only access for the upper level would not be acceptable.
- We should ensure disabled access to all the new areas.
- The cost of running under-floor heating in the nave should be assessed carefully as it would have to be on continuously to be effective.

As a result of this meeting we revised our Statement of Need and our architect redesigned parts of the project to include a small lift and external stairs to the upper floor. She also started work on appointing various specialists as part of the next phase of work. These were:

- David Luard Conservation Ltd – Timber consultant to the London DAC to undertake an assessment of the pews and their historical and structural significance. This survey was completed in early July and suggested that the pews were of mid-range quality but the several changes and losses over the

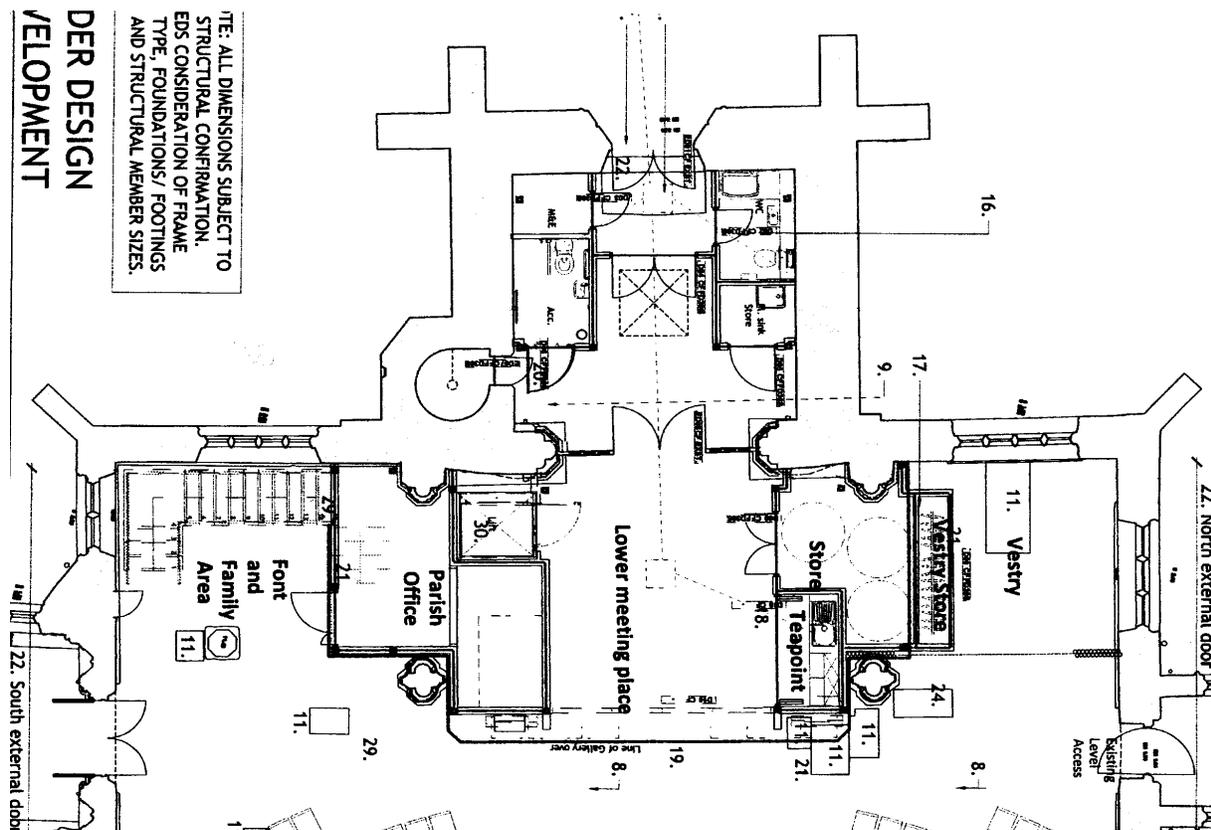
years has drastically reduced their significance but some areas should be preserved in the new scheme.

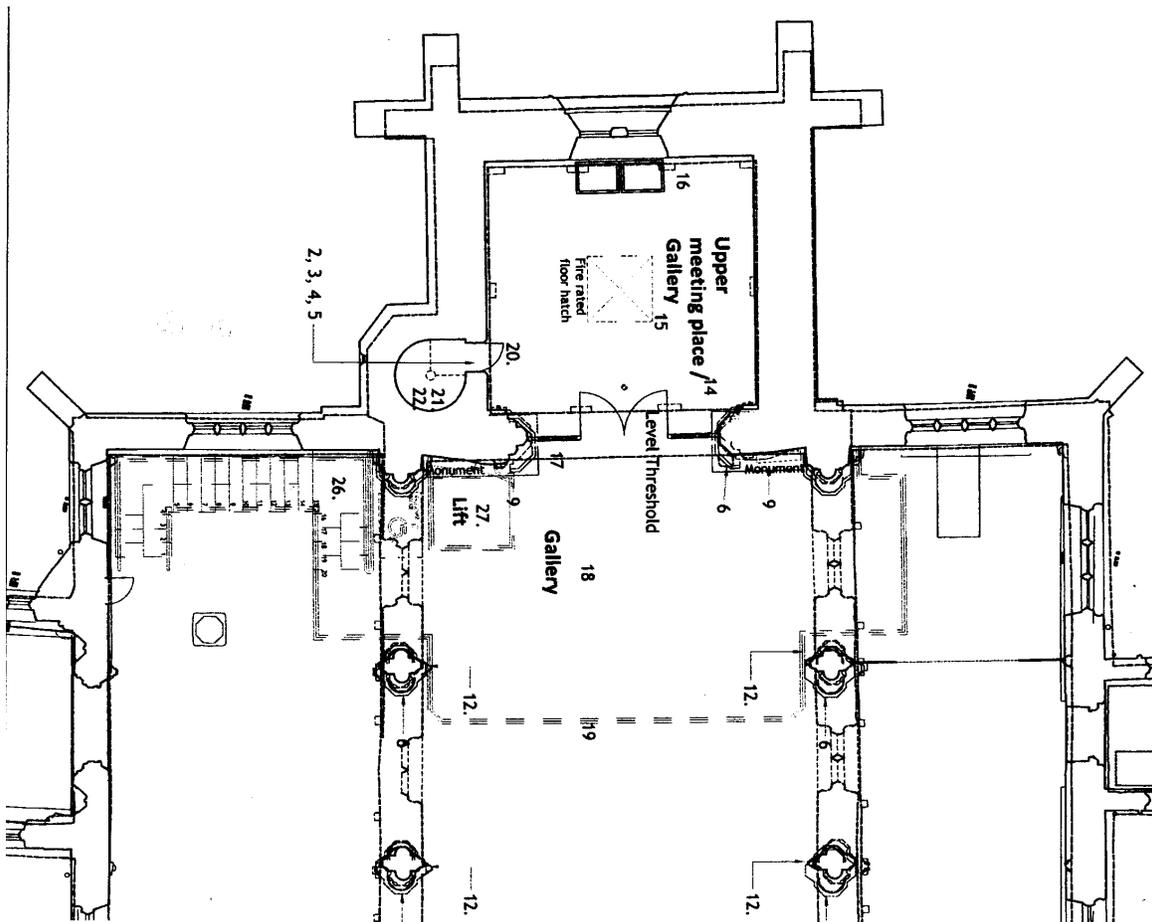
- **Luke Hughes Furnishings** – a supplier of high-quality church (and other) furnishings to get some ideas for the new furniture. He provided several very useful ideas on the potential use of moveable seating which will be investigated.
- **Skillington Workshops** – on the advice of the DAC to analyse the layers of paint on the church stonework with a view to the possibility of removing the paint to expose the original stone. Among other things, they discovered a layer of acrylic paint on the church walls which could account for some of our damp patches as it does not allow the walls to breathe.
- **Jupiter Heating Engineers** – to discuss the practicality of underfloor heating.

As part of the project monitoring our architect produced a 'fee tracker' to manage our current and predicted expenditure and started preparing the scope of services and responsibilities for the design for Stage 3 (this provides a fully costed plan) to brief the mechanical and electrical engineers, structural and civil engineers, quantity surveyors and archaeological consultants.

In July 2017 the Porch Museum produced a briefing document to inform the debate on the use of the upper tower floor and this eventually resulted in an agreement that they would like to display artefacts in the secure upper room.

The following diagrams show the revised plans to meet the DAC suggestions.





Having revised the plan to meet the DAC suggestions our attention turned to the West Door which we had originally specified as a glass external door that would provide an unrestricted view into the church. We were advised that if we specified a new door we would have to comply with disabled access requirements. This would mean lowering the foot of the door to the level of the tower floor and providing a suitable down-slope from the level of the existing path to the door. The Development Group considered that such changes would change the aspect of the West Door to an unacceptable level and also increase the risk of flooding from the down slope. Further study suggested that an inner and outer glass door and the present tower door would provide sufficient reflections to severely limit the view of the church interior. We decided that we would retain the existing (restored) external wooden door that could be left open during the day and fit internal, lockable glass doors.

Part of the proposal for the nave was that the paint should be removed from most of the stonework which would bring the nave back to its original finish and reduce the cost of subsequent redecoration. In August 2017 David Carrington of Skillington Workshop produced a report (held as a word document) on the structure of the various layers of paint on the walls and stonework of the nave. This will provide a historical reference of the church paintwork and a marker for future redecoration.

In March 2018 engineers from Quantity Surveyors Brundell Wooley having visited the church in autumn 2017 produced a budget estimate for the project (excluding the boiler conversion) which indicated an approximate cost for the whole scheme of around £1,159,430. The estimate is held as a PDF.

In October 2018 Dr Stephen Parry from the British Geological Survey (BGS) visited the church to photograph and take samples of the various types of stone used in the floor of the nave to provide recommendations with respect to stones that could justifiably be introduced into the extant paving. Dr Parry was subsequently asked to obtain current production samples of the stone type that had emerged as the strongest candidate for use during the reordering works. On the 27th March Dr Parry presented his findings to the Transformation Group for consideration and advised that when the final decision was made we should obtain larger samples of the stone for comparison. That work is ongoing. Dr Parry's Report ref BGS_303244/4026 is available as a PDF.

This concluded the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 3 of the project. The RIBA 'Plan of Work' is divided into several specific stages:

- **Stage 1** was the preparation of the project and our brief to the architect including initial work on our 'Statement of Need'.
- **Stage 2** was the concept design in very broad terms i.e. what do we need and where.
- **Stage 3** provides us with a 'Developed Design' which covers exact locations but without detail in terms of finish and fabrics and a broad costing for the project. This state of the project is shown in the display in the SW corner of the church. RIBA Stage 4 will provide us with the detailed engineering design of the project.

Before we can proceed to the next stage and start serious fundraising from grant-giving organisations we need the approval of the DAC to continue. That approval required our architect to consult with various interested parties such as the Victorian Society, Historic England etc. That task is ongoing, and we are currently working on a reply to objections to parts of the project from the Victorian Society. As part of the consultation process, and to better inform our arguments and decisions, our architect has undertaken a very detailed study of the development of the seating in St Mary's over the years based on historical records, old photographs and plans. The report should be available soon.

One aspect of the Transformation Project that generated a significant amount of discussion was the method of heating the church after the Transformation. Prior to the installation of the current heating system there was considerable debate over the type of heating to be used. Options included blown warm air, but the final decision was that radiators provided the most efficient, quietest and cost-effective form of heating. As part of the Transformation Project we proposed the installation of under-floor heating in the area of the nave currently occupied by fixed pews as there would not be any requirement to lift existing flooring and underfloor heating would provide a good level of localised heat for the congregation/audience. The advice from our heating engineers was that we would still require another higher temperature heat source adequately to heat the nave to an acceptable level for services and events. Under-floor heating runs at a relatively low temperature and should be left on to provide a minimum temperature in the church. This has implication for electricity consumption by the circulation pumps.

After the many problems that we have had with the boiler and oil supply over the past years we suggested to the PCC that our heating system should be changed to gas rather than the current paraffin oil as part of the project. The PCC has approved the initial consultancy work to check feasibility and the heating capacity required to accommodate the demands of the under-floor heating and we are now working with a heating consultant to produce a costed plan to either re-use the existing (20+ year old) boiler with a new gas burner

fitted, or replace it with a new gas boiler. This project will form the first part of the Transformation work. Initial discussion with our boiler engineer suggested a cost of around £30,000 to convert the system to gas.

In October 2018 CBG Consultants were invited to provide a fee quotation for the work on the boiler conversion and preparation for under-floor heating and November 2018 they proposed the following scope of work:

1. Undertake site survey and review existing plant condition. Where possible existing plant is to be re-used but where necessary include any necessary plant replacement within the plant room refurbishment scheme. (i.e. see whether we would need a new boiler)
2. Discuss findings with the client.
3. Review current heating system to determine the existing heat demand to verify boiler selection. (This will include underfloor heating requirements)
4. Review control philosophy & allow for the replacement if required.
5. Consider/review renewing section of the incoming mains cold water in line with the requirements for the future works.
6. Undertake detailed design and produce tender package complete with specification & drawings.
7. Apply for a new gas connection & include works within the tender package.
8. Agree a list of tendering contractors & issue tender package.
9. Undertake a tender analysis on the tender returns.
10. Carry out project contract administration duties.
11. Prepare JCT Contracts. (Joint Contract Tribunal suite of contracts sets out the responsibilities of all the parties within the process and the obligations to each other.
12. Chair the pre- contract meeting and site progress meetings with the contractor and the client.
13. Carry out snagging visit and sign off the works.
14. Review contractors Operation and Maintenance manual.
15. Review the contractor payment applications and make payment recommendations
16. Produce Pre-Construction Health and Safety Plan as required under CDM

Discussions with the heating engineer at CBG over the wisdom of simply converting the existing boiler to gas against installation of new boilers resulted in a decision to replace the boiler as part of the project. This was endorsed by the PCC.

As a result of this work CBG requested tenders from three boiler specialists and July 2019 submitted a tender report to the Transformation Group which indicated that RF Blount submitted the lowest tender of £108.750 (excl VAT which we should be able to reclaim). As this sum was not yet available the PCC agreed that we should incorporate the work as part of the Transformation Project and include the cost in our fundraising efforts.

ASBESTOS SURVEY

A statutory requirement before any major work is undertaken on a building is an asbestos survey to confirm that the area does not contain any dangerous asbestos material. We received the report in July 2019 which indicated that there was a asbestos based board in the staircase to the left of the St Annes's altar which could be left us disturbed and there was an asbestos based insulation/fireproofing in the organ blower box which should be removed. The subsequent cost of removing the asbestos, and as it turned out, the blower box, was around £2,500 which the Friends paid. We were also faced with the problem of rebuilding the blower box before the next Sunday service. We have yet to get the new box and blower checked and new insulation supplied by a contractor recommended by our organ tuner. As an aside we had a complete asbestos check of the hall completed at the same time with no problems uncovered.

CURRENT SITUATION

Before we can proceed to the detailed design stage (RIBA stage 4), or asking for significant grants, we are required to obtain the approval of the DAC. That approval requires:

- Agreement from the relevant bodies such as the Victorian Society – in progress
- A final version of the Statement of Need – we are close to a final version
- A final version of the statement of Significance – Suzi is finalising an excellent document
- Relevant diagrams – Suzi is gathering these
- Heritage impact assessment – Suzi is working on this

As soon as the DAC has given their approval we can go ahead with grant applications, either ourselves or via a professional fundraiser.

Pending tasks for the Transformation group are:

Agree the Statement of Need. Suzi has suggested a few more photographs showing the restricted space on the altar platform for a choir and orchestra – I should be able to get these at the HP 2 Nov concert plus some extra photos from the Bazaar.

Produce a Business Case which should include:

- A letting strategy – administration, promoting, advertising. Letting rate to meet our business case.
- A letting secretary (or parish administrator) -paid/unpaid, terms of reference etc.
- A letting fee structure – block booking against hourly rate. Rates for smaller areas.
- A team of volunteers to be available to move chairs and staging etc.

Produce a Financial Plan:

- To justify the Transformation as a financially sound option for the future.

- Justify the financial viability of any loans granted e.g. CHCT £20,000 over 4 years.
- Minimum letting income to maintain project liability.
- Revise current financial strategy including giving schemes e.g. Parish Giving to provide stable income.

Set up sub-groups to examine above topics.

Discuss fundraising with Holly Isted at Ely Diocese.

These and any queries arising from this paper will form the basis of our agenda for the 31st October meeting at 10.30 am in church.

COLIN THIRLWALL
28 October 2019

Annex A – list of relevant documents (to be completed)