

EPCM held at All Saint's Church, Preston on Tees

18 March 2017

Present: The Ven. Nick Barker, Archdeacon of Auckland.
74 Electoral Roll members.

Apologies: Jeremy Atkinson, Brian and Gill Wake, Shiromi and Michael Davison

The meeting opened with prayer.

Presentation of Plans

John Lambert introduced the project, outlining the changes which have been made since the initial presentation a year ago. The Statement of Need was described to the congregation, essentially expressing our requirement for extra space for services, and a wish for further space for outreach into our community.

The plan was then reviewed by the members of the re-ordering team.

Martin Howard elaborated on the changes proposed for the **South side of the Church**, and especially on the larger area devoted to outreach, incorporating the present coffee lounge area and extending that area, incorporating the present Garden area, all the way to the present library wall. To the South there will be a new entry point into the area. There will be a new wall at the South with ramp. There would, too, be a widened entry into the Church itself, and large sliding glass panels in the current Church South wall.

Jennifer Brown talked the congregation through the area labelled as **Children's Ministry**, which would also be available for the various hiring groups. This would make a larger space.

Simon Honeywell talked through the **Narthex, Office and Lobby**. At the front door a glazed and welcoming door. The entry proper into the church will be widened. The present Chapel area will be a new Office, leaving a small space set aside for the use as a lobby (waiting Area).

Jenny Lewis presented the proposed **North Extension**. Expansion into the North (see the plan) would create space for a further 40 seats, with an aisle along the present wall. There remain queries about the stability of the subsoil which must be resolved: but it represents a real possibility. If the proposals go ahead we shall be using the opportunity presented by the work to be done to redesign the windows throughout the church for improved insulation and light.

John Lambert described the proposal for **Stage Area and new Chapel**: a well-lit place of prayer at the heart of the building and enabling a focus on prayer. It would be placed where the eye naturally falls: there is therefore a need for something lifting the spirit. John described the placing of the chapel wall of glass and frosted glass, with a design springing from a competition among invited artists, giving a bright focus for worship and for prayer. He showed an example of the sort of etched glass that might be put into it. In front of the chapel there would be a raised space making more visible all those involved in leading the services with a proposed baptistry let into the floor to allow baptism by immersion, which is increasingly common. (And, as the Archdeacon pointed out, deeply embedded in the Anglican Church from its beginning.)

The congregation then broke into small groups to discuss what they had heard. After this break the meeting reconvened to a Question and Answer session.

There was great enthusiasm for the south extension, query about the wall at the end of the Offices.

There was concern about the strength of the wall on the North Side, expressed by a number of contributors, supporting as it will a new roof structure.

Concerns were expressed about the overall design of the Chancel/Chapel. It is important that the light continues to enter the church proper. It was suggested that the Baptistry might be placed in the centre of the church rather than in its proposed position.

Would an additional fire exit be needed from the extra space?

There would need to be proper management for a new Centre. The new room would be very welcome for hire.

We would need to get the neighbours on hand.

Concern was raised about the installation of a flat roof. (In fact the roof will have a slight slope).

A main concern of one group was about the about the Chancel area: would the band create a problem in sorting out the equipment: might it be messy with all the wires etc? This needs more discussion.

Would it be noisy for people going up for prayer? It might be advantageous to have another access for more private prayer. The prayer ministry model may be changed. The need for quiet prayer is noted.

Concern was expressed about the "new roof". There is no intention to change the slope of the current roof. A roof over the new area would be a separate construction.

Where do the Choral Group go? In the staged area as they need to be able to see the Organist. There are about 15 in the Choral Group at the moment.

A wider door is proposed for the entry into the Nave. It could also with advantage be higher, particularly for its use during funerals: the coffin bearers find it too low.

The lighting generally is to be considered once more in the light of the changes.

Some discussion ensued about the arranging of seats in the North extension. A suggestion was made that we might use collapsible seats there?

Would there be an increase in the need for parking? How do we cope? Various options have been considered: more work is needed. We do not wish at present to use the grass area. We may need to consider it if pushed by the Council. Should we consider a grid system for parking?

A question was raised as to a possible extension of the wall of the North extension. It is all subject to Planning, and to Faculties. We may need to erode space.

Do we need to enlarge still more?

Worries were expressed about the memorials on the walls: will they be kept? The Archdeacon said that in general the DAC looks with favour on the proposal. We shall need to list what is significant (given items, memorials etc.), then to provide our statement of need. We have available expert advice on how to deal with conflicts between these ideals, and how to accommodate memorial and given objects. He repeated that the DAC has looked at the proposals, and in general approves. The question of the pulpit was raised. It is not much used, but it was given in memoriam, though in memory of members of the congregation long past. While the church is not a museum, and some change will be inevitable, we shall seek ways to move forward using the expert help referred to above.

Will we need a greater attention to the wall structure? We have no survey as yet on the sub-soil: concerns were expressed about both sides of the church, and the support for the roof.

The comment was made that we are blessed: the debate indicates that the church is growing, where many other churches are declining, and the re-ordering of the church will teach the local community about that growth.

Decisions

John Lambert put forward from the chair a succession of proposals, each with the rider that it must be dependent upon Planning Permission, Faculties, and finally, Financing, and furthermore, that we can expect changes: this represents approval to go forward.

That the meeting approves the proposal within the Architect's scheme for **Lobby 2 and the South extension**. All in favour.

That the meeting approves the **Children's Ministry Room** as detailed in the Architect's document. All in favour.

That the meeting approves the alterations to **the Narthex and Chapel** as detailed in the Architect's document. All in favour.

That the meeting approves the **North extension** as detailed in the Architect's document. One abstention, all others in favour.

That the meeting approves the suggested **alterations to the Chancel to incorporate the new Chapel and raised space** given that there will be a choice among three designs chosen by competition among artists. Two abstentions, all others in favour.

The Meeting finished with prayer and thanksgiving.