



A programme of refurbishment for St. Bartholomew's

Dear Friends,

I hope that you will find the following paragraphs of interest! They develop the themes of restoration and renewal of the temple – the redecoration of the Parish Church as a celebration of our ongoing work of mission and outreach as the Body of Christ.

In October 2007 the Bishop of Salisbury and the Diocesan Secretary set out a strategic approach to the management of Church buildings in the diocese. The vision is to awaken the imagination of parishes on the future of our buildings in the context of our mission plans.

Two things offer us encouragement and insight as we seek to move forward with a programme of refurbishment and try to develop a strategy to care for the fabric of St. Bartholomew's Church. The first is an increased confidence in the diocese, generated by a sense that our buildings are a well-managed gift. The second is to communicate a theology of place in such a way that our common life is transformed, that people feel at home in church and able to connect their daily experience to the life and worship that goes on in church.

We know that our parish church is a gift and that is why we are planning to devote resources and energy to refurbishing it; and from the comments we receive, people feel at home in St. Bartholomew's and value our shared ministry. St. Bartholomew's is a vibrant and exciting place to be, it is a space where people find God and it is home to a worshipping community committed to being inclusive: for these reasons we must now take up the challenge of refurbishment; honouring the past, celebrating the present, securing the future.

In July 2008 the PCC held an open meeting, the result of that meeting has formed the outline of a refurbishment project – The Project – which will hopefully be agreed at the next PCC. Funding of the feasibility studies that accompany such an enthusiastic project have been generated by the successful 10:10 campaign, which has run throughout the summer and ended at the close of November.

The main funding of the project will begin in 2009 and while I acknowledge that the church seems always be asking for funds, we need to ask how long has it been since we tried to properly redecorate? And how much goodwill is there for the town's Parish Church, even in stark economic times?

My commitment to this project is generated by the belief that God is calling us, as a worshipping community, to make him present in the town so that the town can better be presented to him through our worship.

Listed below are the key areas highlighted for work at the July meeting; the Project will also aim at developing a long-term maintenance strategy:-

ELECTRICS

A recent report to the PCC has identified the need to rewire the church. This will give an opportunity to improve the general lighting by use of up lighters, down lighters and spotlights to enhance the building, with special attention to the Reredos.

In line with environmental concerns we will look for opportunities to develop our use of low-energy lighting. We will explore the possibility of converting the church floodlights to LED lights to save

energy, thus enabling lights to be on every night to help with security of church.

HEATING

The fan convector heaters need refurbishing or replacing; an overhaul of the heating system with an eye to modern energy saving devices might attract external funding as well as long term savings.

ROOFING

There is concern regarding the condition of the roof, particularly our reoccurring leaks! This is a priority.

CHILDREN'S AREA

Explore the possibility of moving the children's area to an area near the font, making it more child friendly and accessible. In the light of this development we might change the direction in which the choir and clergy process, to allow them to move down the length of the whole church.

SEATING

The choir stalls are currently very cramped and we need to be open to the possibility of reordering these stalls.

Restate some pews, if the children's corner moves and reattach pews to the floor to ensure safety.

Explore the need for new chairs in the Lady Chapel, as the current chairs reach the end of their natural life.

DAIS AND FLOORING

Increase the size of dais, so that when the church is used by the schools or for concerts there is not always the need to assemble staging. A larger dais would increase the liturgical scope of the church.

The wooden floors needs re-staining and re-varnishing; the tiled flooring needs repair and attention, the Lady Chapel and Font area need recarpeting.

REDECORATION

The Project began with a discussion about the need for some replastering along with a wholesale redecoration of the walls. On the way the Reredos needs specialised cleaning, the stonework needs attention, we need to consider new door curtains and refurbished or replacement of the glass porch doors.

NOTICE BOARDS

Replace existing piecemeal arrangement with one scheme for the

whole church, inviting the Church's groups to be part of the planning.

BELLS

Oak bell frame needs to be replaced with steel, add 2 bells to make a peal of 10.

Use stone staircase in tower to give ringing chamber an exterior access, and free up space in vestry by removing the wooden staircase.

The Bellringers are leading the way with refurbishment as the redecorated bell tower bears testimony.

To this point we should thank John Hopkins and the team who have been working with him during 2008. As we move into the next stage of development, thinking seriously about the Project, agreeing with the things included in it or arguing for further inclusions or exclusions, that current team will be invited to re-commit themselves to the task, we shall seek ways of enhancing the team, and we shall ask that the worshipping community commit the project to prayer.

This is a huge undertaking and the PCC, at its November meeting, unanimously agreed to see it through, as we seek to go forward with God's blessing, our commitment needs to be seen in the light of our mission strategy. It is a worthless task if all we are left with is a smart church, so in 2009 we will begin a programme of outreach to the town. Organising ourselves to go out and greet our neighbours as members of the Body of Christ, knowing that we have a building worthy to be called a house of prayer and home to an inclusive community prepared to greet in His name.

Over time we will share more detailed plans through the monthly newsletter, plans which will include supporting our brothers and sisters in the Sudanese diocese of Mundri, which will see people asked again what they think as the detailed plans emerge, which will probably see us going, as a pilgrim people, to worship in the church school or church hall, while the work is carried out. The PCC felt energized as they made their decisions, it is your commitment and support that will enable them to see the Project finished during 2010 and 2011

With best wishes from the PCC,

Thomas Woodhouse