

Notes from Open House Meeting re Proposed Parish Hall 13 December 2010

On Monday 13 December 8 parishioners attended the meeting with the Parish Finance Committee to discuss the proposal for a new Parish Hall, as outlined at masses on the weekend of 4/5 December. The following questions were raised:

Hall Design

Q. Why does the plan show 2 new yew trees planted at the front of the church and will these obscure the view of the church over time?

A. All the trees currently on the site are protected by a Preservation Order imposed in 2008. We have been advised that the Council will give permission to cut down one tree, which is essential for the proposed plan, provided we plant 2 replacement trees. The position shown on the plan is the best position for 2 new trees.

Q. Has the Finance Committee considered the option of conversion works to the church interior so the present seating area could be used as a Parish venue when not in use for church services, with the altar appropriately screened and separated?

A. No, this option has not been considered. It would clearly be a less costly option, but it would also be less flexible, would not provide the needed toilets and could not be used for Children's Liturgy, which takes place during Mass. The majority present felt there was a risk that multi-purpose use of the church in this way might reduce reverence for the sacred space, especially among children.

Q. Would there still be access from the sacristy to the front of the church on the side where the hall would stand?

A. No. The proposed hall would extend from the church to the hedge and access would only be along the other side of the church.

Financing

Q. What do we expect the terms of a loan from another parish to be?

A. 10 years, interest free.

Q. Is it possible to borrow for longer than 10 years?

A. No, we understand 10 years is the maximum possible.

Q. Has this approach been tried before?

A. Yes, it is a tried and tested route for such projects. St Pius X would not be a guinea pig.

Q. Has the Finance Committee estimated and budgeted for the running costs of a Hall?

A. No, we have deliberately postponed this exercise until we know whether the building project is viable. We recognise that there will be costs, including heating,

lighting and insurance, but we hope the Hall would also generate some revenues from private hire for appropriate purposes.

Q. Uncertainty over the future of the Chaplaincy fee from Kingston Hospital obviously complicates the Parish's financial position. Is there any definite news yet and might the Diocese assume responsibility for its payment?

A. Yes it is a great uncertainty and no there is no definite news. To be prudent, the Finance Committee is budgeting for the fee to disappear totally, but it is possible that this assumption is too gloomy. The Diocesan Finance Director who will approve our building project and help us secure the necessary loan is also responsible for the Chaplaincy contract with Kingston Hospital, so he is fully in the picture about our position.

Q. When will you make a decision whether to go ahead?

A. Once we have received all the forms back we will be able to judge whether the project has broad backing from parishioners and sufficient financial support to make it viable. We will let the Parish know the outcome in January.

Fund Raising

Q. When will serious fund raising commence?

A. Hopefully in Spring 2011, once planning permission has been obtained, the necessary loan secured and there is a definite project to support.

Q. Is the intention to involve the whole Parish?

A. Definitely yes. The plan is to form a separate fund raising Committee to lead and co-ordinate the efforts of all parishioners. We hope especially that children in the Parish will want to get involved, since they will benefit particularly from the Hall.

Q. What ideas for fund raising have been put forward so far?

A. Sponsored walks, coffee mornings, a Parish recipe book and approaches to charities known to favour Catholic causes. Some ideas, such as a Parish lottery, require further investigation to ensure they are still allowable fund raising activities.