

THE PARISH OF **ST. JOHN BAPTIST, BROUGHTON**

Charity Number: 1134595

Jesus said, "I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15.16

We seek to make Jesus known in our community, through our joyful, loving service and worship

Parish Announcement - Sunday 21st October 2018

Today, all services in the parish, including the choir and parishioners who are in Liverpool, the PCC has some important and exciting news to share with you.

First of all, we are publishing the results of the Parish Review. The document that is available in all of the worship centres today is a three-page executive summary. To print each of the five reports, together with supplementary information, would amount to a 60-page document. So, in addition to the summary that is available to you in print today, all the sub-groups' final reports, their recommendations and supporting information will be available to read on the parish website from Monday 22nd October. Should anyone wish to have a paper version, these will be available upon request from the parish office.

Second, the PCC wishes to share with you some other news that is integral to driving the aspirations expressed in the Parish Survey and followed through in the Parish Review and our mission. The PCC, as trustees of a charity have a legal responsibility to make the assets and finances of the charity they represent, which is the parish of St. John Baptist, work to support the charity's aims and objectives. Financially we are not in a good place. This financial year we are anticipating a parish deficit of £30,000. Our parish's easily accessible funds have now been exhausted. I can assure you that we are not profligate in our parish spending. The simple explanation is that despite recent efforts to increase giving in the parish, our income is still not matching our expenditure. In socio-economic terms we live in the wealthiest part of the Preston Deanery. Yet our per capita giving is at the bottom of the Deanery giving when compared to other parishes. For too many years we have relied upon generous legacies to prop up the parish's finances. We are looking at a dire cash flow situation and are limping to the end of this year, never mind facing the prospect of going forward into 2019.

We are now down to the last two major legacies that are designated and protected for supporting the parish's mission and ministry, and not paying the parish's day-to-day bills and parish share. The time for the parish sticking its head in the sand and thinking that everything will be "ok" has gone. We all have to take action, and take it now, otherwise this parish will be bankrupt in less than 10 years and will not exist as we know it. So the PCC and the parish have some major decisions to face.

St. Martin's Chapel will celebrate its Diamond Jubilee this December, and to mark it there will be a whole parish Eucharist on Sunday, 9th December, when the celebrant and preacher will be the Rt. Rev. Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster. St. Martin's Chapel and the hall complex has served the parish and local community well for the past 60 years, but is no longer fit for purpose for the needs of our parish in the future. It does not provide us with the rooms and facilities we need. It is not affordable. Income generated by letting is not meeting expenditure due to the costs of heating, lighting and maintaining an old building that is not environmentally friendly. Last year the maintenance costs for the building were over £7,000 and the complex saw a deficit of £4,790. This is not sustainable, especially when I tell you that major maintenance costs of around £100,000 are looming. New boilers are required and significant work is needed on the roof, to name just two items. We do not have £100,000 to spend on maintenance. As Jesus said, "you don't put new wine into old wine skins." Unless we do something radical this complex will close within 5 years, and the parish will lose its presence in this part of the community. I don't want that to happen, the PCC doesn't want that to happen, and I'm sure you don't want that to happen.

So, with all of this in mind, back in January the PCC commissioned the Parish Review, alongside the Review it also commissioned a confidential piece of work to undertake a full Options Appraisal of the St. Martin's complex and site, recognising that the two go hand-in-hand. The Options Appraisal sub-group consisting of Father Shaun, Andrea and Jim Titterington and Chris Couper, undertook a thorough appraisal of all options regarding our major asset that sits in the heart of the parish. There were various options to consider:

- Do Nothing
- Refurbish the Existing Complex
- Sell the Complex and Plot and bank the money
- Sell and use the money to relocate and build elsewhere
- Redevelop, using the proceeds of the sale of some of the plot to finance the project.

"Do nothing" is not an option. To do nothing will see the building continue to be a financial drain on the parish, and the complex will be mothballed within 5 years.

Independent contractors estimated that to repair and refurbish the existing building to bring them up to modern day, eco-friendly standards, reconfigure the facilities in a way that meets our parish and community needs and mission plans, will cost over £500,000 excluding VAT. We simply don't have this money.

Selling up and taking the money isn't an option as we will lose our presence in the heart of our community which cannot be contemplated by the PCC or me. St. Martin's is an important worship centre and community hub that has far more potential for the parish than is currently being realised. In any case, taking the money will simply keep us afloat a little longer and will do little to encourage the regular, generous giving that is needed to support the parish on a day-to-day basis.

Please dismiss from your minds that because this 1.2 acre plot of land is in Fulwood that it is worth a seven figure sum. It isn't. Independent values tell us that it is worth less than half that figure – given the cost of demolition and the number of properties that would fit on it. So selling up and moving elsewhere isn't an option. Any money that is realised from the sale would not buy a new plot and build us a new worship centre and hall complex. Plus there is no site available in Fulwood where we want to maintain a parish presence.

This leaves us with the final option. On 6th October, the PCC met for an Away Day to consider the findings and recommendations of the Parish Review and those of the Options Appraisal, both of which are integral to the ministry, mission and growth of our parish.

The PCC's vision is to build a new, affordable, fit-for-purpose parish worship and community centre on the St. Martin's site that will serve us now and enable us to realise our parish vision and mission for the next 60 years and more.

Working with a trusted, non-profit partner, the intention is to sell some of the site. The money realised from the sale will enable us to have the new building with a worship centre and a parish hall similar to what we have now, but slightly smaller. It will be eco-friendly, affordable and comfortable. It will give us a dedicated parish room that we can access permanently for meetings, Bible study, prayer groups, social gatherings, etc. Other rooms of varying sizes can be screened off into smaller individual spaces or opened up into larger spaces. There will be a fully functioning catering kitchen that will enable us to fulfil the missional social outreach ambitions expressed in the parish survey and will also make the building more attractive to outside users. The parish office will be at the entrance of the building, offering a friendly welcome to all visitors. The building itself will be physically recognizable as a Christian place of worship, rather than the non-descript building we currently have.

The land sold to finance the new build will be developed into 14 properties comprising 9 two-bed apartments for over 55s; 4 semi-detached houses and 1 detached house. The houses will be sold on a shared-ownership basis to ensure affordability. The apartments will assist with downsizing and will also be for sale. These homes will offer much needed local housing provision not currently available within the new housing springing up in North Preston. It is an important offering by the parish to the community it serves.

So that's our plan. But what are the next steps? First of all, some of the current provisions catered for on the St. Martin's site will not reappear in the new build and we recognise that this will cause some upset. We apologise for this and will try to minimize the impact where possible, but we have to be driven by the wider vision, needs and mission, both now and going forward. Other hall users will have to find temporary accommodation whilst the new build takes place.

All of the groups and organisations that currently use this complex will be contacted by letter after today's announcements. We are also aware that our neighbours will need to be informed of our plans, and they too will receive letters.

All parishioners, complex users and neighbours are invited to attend an Open Afternoon on Sunday, 11th November, at 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall, when there will be in-depth presentations about our plans with opportunities for questions and answers. Initial designs and plans for the new St. Martin's complex and housing development will be available to view.

The PCC is taking the opportunity today to state our intentions, informing you, the parish, first, and then to announce to the wider community. You will be kept fully informed as matters progress.

I hope you appreciate that this isn't the time or place to give more detailed information. People need time to allow this news to sink in. Please bring your questions to next month's Open Meeting.

In the meantime, all the necessary formal processes are about to begin to take this forward. Providing that all goes smoothly the earliest we can hope to see anything happening on site will be summer 2019, with the new build taking a minimum of 12 months to complete.

We are fortunate that we have a parish church and St. Peter's to cater for our worship provisions when the time comes for St. Martin's to be redeveloped. We, as a parish, will have to pull together to support the congregation at St. Martin's. We are also very aware of the local sensitivities involved. Everything that happens will be transparent. The PCC will be fully appraised of each step and the parish will be informed accordingly.

A reminder of our parish mission statement: *"Jesus said, 'I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.' We seek to make Jesus known in our community through our joyful, loving service and worship.*

If we are serious about making our parish mission statement a living reality, we have to be more proactive in all aspects of parish life. Translating the Parish Review into a Mission Action Plan that maps out the way ahead, and having a modern, purpose-built worship centre and hub in the middle of the parish will enable us to do this and much more. Please pray for what we are seeking to do, and please give it your wholehearted support. This is integral to the future of the parish.

God bless,

Father Shaun Baldwin, Vicar of Broughton
for and on behalf of the Parochial Church Council

