

Building Group Report

What a year!

When the group first met, we were convinced our task would be to get our plans ready for submission by the start of 2008. But the further we went with our consultations, more and more individuals and groups expressed real concerns that the plans would not fully meet their needs. Size, room height, 2 or 3 storeys, even design were all compromises on our original vision. The fire in the Church rooms made us all realize what a valuable asset we already have. So we called a day of prayer and fasting in December, and asked for comments and thoughts about whether we should continue to try to build attached to the Church, or whether, after 10 years planning, God was telling us to change direction and seriously consider the option of building on the site of the existing Church Rooms. To help in the decision making process, Tony Swannie had asked an architect to consider the sort of building which could meet most of the needs of our user groups and allow for future growth. We are very grateful to Tony for his involvement and enthusiasm for this project. When the comments and suggestions from our congregation were analysed, there was a large majority in favour of not pursuing the extension on the Church itself, but to consider developing the existing Church room site.

Since Christmas, we have had 4 developers value the site and we have met with various diocesan representatives, as they own about two thirds of the site and the Benefice owns the remaining one third. These discussions are ongoing, and we have two further meetings arranged later this month, one with the diocese and the other a preliminary meeting with Walsall Planning Department to present them with our new vision.

We have tried not to neglect the ongoing repairs and improvements to the Church. Tony Phillips has spent a long time repairing the notice board and overseeing the fabric of the building. Two stained glass windows have been renovated. Brian Palmer has undertaken a number of jobs to help us meet more stringent health and safety issues. The decision has been taken by the PCM not to repair the organ and Trevor Francis has been considering the best digital organ to meet our needs. Three organ manufacturers have visited and assessed what they consider their most suitable organ for us and to quote what this would cost. We hope our new committee will see updating the kitchen as a major priority.

Many thanks to all who have served on the committee, especially Cliff Lavender who retired this year, and to all who have helped in the maintenance of our fine building.