

Being Transformed by Jesus to see the Kingdom come



PCC Minutes

Approved by PCC on 25th January 2016

Date: Saturday 21st November 2015
Venue: St. Michael's Church Centre, Stoke Gifford
Chair: Paul Langham
Present: Brendan Biggs, Patrick Bolster, Leighton Carr, Lindsey Cutter, David Daniels, Melanie Griffiths, Derek Hadden, Rosemarie Hall (Minutes), Janet Lee, Tim Meathrel, Mark Parsons, Graham Stuart, Granville Sykes, Sara Wadsworth, Val Moore (from 10.30am)

Roberto and Suzanne Elvira were invited as guests to the meeting

Chris Bradley – Treasurer at St Michael's, Stoke Gifford who oversaw their building project joined the meeting for the first sections.

Apologies: Martin Freye, Sian Lowe, Jill Garfitt, Alice Denyer, Erica Bebb

The meeting opened with a time of prayer.

1. Tour of St. Michael's / Q&A with Chris Bradley

Chris Bradley was introduced to the meeting. A brief history of the building project was given. St Michael's has grown steadily. In 2002 the Old School Rooms were built which gave the opportunity to expand but this was eventually outgrown. The current project has a gestation period of 25 years. The land for the new build was purchased in 2006 for £500k; the planned demolition of the barns was stopped so that these could be renovated instead. The plans were developed rapidly and on one Sunday the congregation gave £125k. Planning permission was granted in 2010 (once planning permission is granted, work has to commence within 3 years). St. Michael's have raised £4.8m (2.8 m donations/borrowed £2m). The church has never borrowed money before.

Chris then led a tour of the building and answered questions as they arose.

Fundraising. Chris advised that his experience was that 90% of the funds came from 10% of the people. He also advised that there is a need to be aware that within the church family there will be a variety of mindsets, illustrated with an image of a train:

- Engine: "Visionaries" (red) "what?" = 3% (see the future)

- Front Carriage: "Early Adopters" – (yellow) "who"/"when" = 11% (e.g. students, who have no money!)
- Rear Carriage: "Conservatives" (green) – "how" = 69% (not against the project, but cautious, persuadable) - where bulk of funding will come from (mortgages paid off etc.)
- Break Van: "Traditionalists" (blue) – "why?" = 17% (won't see reason for doing, could appear to want to close things down)

Bearing all of this in mind, communication is key. Each group needs to hear a different message so, need to be clear on:-

- Visionaries – what are we going to do?
- Early Adopters - when are we doing it? Who will do it?
- Conservatives – how going to raise money?
- Traditionalists – why are we doing this? /what is the evidence it's needed?

It is important to show a business plan, the steps of the process etc. Stoke Gifford held two big events to which everybody was invited. A brochure was circulated which had different colour coded messages targeted to each of the four groups.

Important to remember that the vast majority of the church family were not being difficult; they just needed to be given information and needed more time.

Chris also advised that a Steering Group was formed, comprising of:-

- Fundraising Manager
- Design
- Communications

Questions were then invited:-

Q. How did you know this was God's will for this church?

A. 25 years of history of which old school rooms was part. Congregation were used to some growth already. There was lots of prayer! When planning permission was granted, there were lots of concern but sufficient people who thought it could work. In May 2012 they gave brochures, there was enough consensus to test the water. Had a Gift Day (people invited to pledge money over a 5 year period). 70% was their starting target – raised £2.035m which was sufficient to meet criteria to go ahead. However, a large proportion were concerned that it was too big (Treasurers tend to be comfortable with borrowing x6 income but they went for x18!) Annual income was £400k at the time. It was clear that they had to push the green button knowing that a significant number were unsure. However, as they saw the buildings going ahead and funds coming in, more were convinced.

Q Did you lose any congregation members as a result of doing the project?

A. Yes, lost two families.

Q. How were relationships between the design team and congregations? What was the opportunity for input?

A. As it was a brand new build, the main discussion was "what do you want to see in the new building?" Lots of ideas were shared then they approached the Architect. Everybody was able to see how their ideas were routed in the design.

Chris shared the importance of praying for the Project Leaders who come under great pressure.

It was noted that it was good to see their approach had been a combination of faith and common sense.

Q. Did you have any support from the Council?

A. Local councillors supported the project but the Council planning team opposed and were very difficult.

It was noted that most of CC project is internal so will not need planning permission.

Q. When do you expect to have cleared your debts?

A. Need to raise funds for 3 years but first 2 are covered.

Q. Building costs/inflation – issues etc. What did you experience?

A. Used Bray & Slaughter. There was cost inflation. Changed design half way through which led to most of the cost inflation = £400k-£500k. Put a lot of contingency in but it was all used. Significant cost inflation in mechanical and electrical engineering with prices going up monthly.

Q. What would you do differently?

A. Speed and having time to gather up the conservatives/traditionalists. Wish there had been more time to consult, include and listen. Some church members will still only go to the old church building

Q. Has the church grown since the building was opened?

A. Was 320 when started now at 360. New people are seen each week in the new auditorium. They see God's people with vision serving the community

Q. Have you any sense of spiritual development during the project?

A. Without doubt; the role of a leader is to have vision and inspire hope, when hope dies, people lose motivation. When they see money being raised, their faith grows.

Chris commended a "force-field" exercise in which all the church family were invited to think about the proposals, write down and share their thoughts and concerns. This allows people to have their say and see it documented.

The engagement of a Project Manager was critical at this stage.

Q. How did the planning team relate to the PCC?

A. St. Michael's Church Centre Ltd is a separate charity, separate from the PCC (3 are/3 not PCC members). Trustees are responsible.

Chris concluded by kindly advising that Stoke Gifford would be pleased to offer Christ Church whatever help they may require.

Thanks were expressed to Chris for all his assistance and the meeting took some time to pray for him.

Val Moore arrived, having returned from London. She had attended the Christian Youth Awards at the London School of Theology. Val was shortlisted for the "Volunteer of the Year" Award and was congratulated on being the Runner Up.

**10:30am Renew – Hopes & Concerns – *an opportunity for us*
*All to reflect and take stock of where we are***

The group were encouraged to write down:-

- 3 things most excite about RENEW
- 3 things that give most concern

These were as follows:-

Excitements

- Being used by community more (Family Centre & Village Hall)
- More involvement with the community
- Stepping out in faith
- Church being open to all in the daytime
- Expansion of work of the Gospel
- Better facilities for children and families
- Opportunities to unit congregation
- God transforming us the people through RENEW
- Bright new building
- Welcoming space for community
- Space to grow
- Connecting better with our community
- Making the building open and accessible to the community
- Stretching our faith and seeing God at work
- More ergonomic/ease of use
- Changing the way we worship and do "life" together
- God blessing our Diocese and City through RENEW
- Updating tired fabric and dreadful Crypt ceiling/horrible toilets!
- Having an open church
- Chance for us to come together as one in faith and grow in evangelism
- God transforming our community through RENEW
- Transformation of the people through transforming the building
- The design is great
- The team of talent in CCC
- Potential for outreach to the community in a new way
- Making church building more suitable for our needs
- Bringing congregation together in unity and vision
- Trusting God for something big!
- The building will become a thriving hub of Clifton

- Drawing the community into our church
- Transforming our space to enable us to joyfully follow our Lord
- Potential for my spiritual growth and that of my Brothers and Sisters
- Growth
- Change through RENEW
- Gods vision in our people
- The design will be a great improvement on what we have now
- New work in Crypt
- More space
- Better facilities
- More opportunities for mission and community use
- A full building 7 days a week used by community
- Seeing our church grow in faith and numbers
- To open church to the community 7 days a week
- To make more elderly/disabled friendly
- Excited about the journey – stepping out and testing my faith
- Better use of space
- Crypt
- Possibility of greater community impact
- Seeing what God will do
- Sense of vision that will encourage faith of congregation to grow and mobilise and excite people
- Providing facilities that serve the local community
- Vision for community

Concerns

- The heart of the congregation – not sure there is enough positive thinking about the church in general to take us through the project
- The number of people who feel we have not communicated with them
- Raising the funds (but also excited as can only happen with God!)
- The impact of any delay on momentum & vision and giving
- For the welfare of the “lead person”
- Finance
- Organ removal – implications
- Loss of spacious feel of building if adding screens etc. to the church building
- Very big project
- The church unity
- Clarifying the vision for the church family
- Taking on the financial risk
- Not balancing vision enough with wisdom
- Magnitude of RENEW
- Finances
- Not being able to raise the money and so not finishing or compromising
- “Bottling out” and not doing it
- Conflict within congregation
- Finances
- Frustration of delay
- How the plans are communicated/discussed with congregation – still some say they didn’t know...
- Fundraising – need more prayer
- Losses

- The "Living Stones"
- Taking as many people with us as possible
- A massive financial commitment shortly after redundancies
- Money
- Raising the money to do the project
- Trying to convince some of our church family
- Lack of clear vision for the project
- Potential damage to congregation
- Some design features – loss of storage and scullery space in crypt
- We're rushing it
- Congregation are not on board with plan
- People feel lack of consultation and views are not valued
- It is a lot of money
- Project going too fast – many people are still not on board
- Are we as a church ready to take on this project?
- Funds
- Congregational involvement
- Community involvement
- Do NOT sell Linden Gate!
- Things could mean other areas of mission are put on hold – further afield
- Not sure if the congregation is yet in the place to be positive about this.
Re a lot of hurt on part of "traditionalists" – could make matters worse
- Losing momentum
- Execution of project
- Funds
- Hurting anyone
- Losing courage
- Lack of prayer
- Bigger picture – given the discussions in the wider C of E, should we spend this much money on a building which might be taken away from us in a number of years' time?
- The organ – if we dispose of it, we will have had poor value from the money spent on it over the last 40 years.

10:45am Renew - Listening to God

Tim led a time of individually listening to God. "Lord what are you saying to us?"

11:05am Renew - Listening to one another and feedback

The groups shared together:

- If CC wasn't here – would we be missed? Who would be missed?
- Community – Worship "The heart of the Community"
- Is God for this project?
- 12 spies – 10 had fear/2 had faith
- Together brings faith
- The care of the people is crucial
- Christ Church not completely built up when some are looking ahead and some are still not rooted in the "old" – and risk getting locked in.
- Programme of use of St. Michael's Church Centre is full

- Working time for vision would be essential
- "Place of Worship" at the heart
- Healing/Trust & Transparency/Unity – 3 hinges on the door that open the building into the community
- "A bruised reed He will not break" (Isaiah 42) – be careful we don't lose people
- Impressed by St. Michael's:-
 - – but we are not in Clifton
 - Fewer external drivers
 - Need to be clear
 - Fundraising is key
 - Unclear about issues
 - Is our motivation to serve? Or compete?
- Key areas to grow in:-
 - Strategic prayer (Nehemiah 4)
 - Faith (Philippians 1:6)
 - Discipleship
 - Mission (Luke 10)
 - Commitment (Revelation 3:14)
- Look beyond the building to God's vision for us – look out
- Psalm 52 – "Renew my Spirit" first then "Build up the walls of Jerusalem"
- Here is metaphor for CC – some bad news – some a building site
- If not build for the future, must build for the present – dream & wisdom
- More healing for us at CC? "Traditionalists" – St. Michael's ahead of us in this
- Old & New (St M's = new space in old bit- CC in old place and new church)
- Matthew 14:25-33 – Caring for each other, stand together, love each other – even when disagree. Done with people in mind – comfort. Vision of congregation – behind plans?
- Psalm 51:-
 - v10 "Create in me a pure heart Oh God, and RENEW a steadfast spirit within me.
 - v17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, Oh God, you will not despise"
 - V18 "In your good pleasure make Zion prosper, **build up the walls** of Jerusalem"
- A call to repentance, a broken heart to a pure heart to renew a right or steadfast spirit then in God's good pleasure, make Christ Church prosper and **build up** the walls.

Question to ponder: "how do we know if this project is God's will?"

11:30am Coffee Break

11:45am Renew - Discussion and Decision

Leighton Carr gave an outline of the progress on the project to date.

There had been some deep thinking over the past year. There were consultations in February/March 2015 to ascertain "How does the scheme meet the needs of the church?" The team then held smaller consultations with Ministry Heads etc. asking if the design meets their requirements.

Around 20 email responses have so far been received from the church family since the publication of the latest plans.

Where are we today? Looking back at what has happened, has the process had integrity? How should we reflect and how long should reflection take? There is a need to understand that we are in the process of transforming the church family - going from a strong community that is inward looking to a strong community who want to be an open, hospitable community. Transformation must take place at every level to be complete.

The next stage is to get informal advice from the DAC. To do this we will need to complete the Statement of Need and do some more drawings. The aim is to go to the DAC in Easter 2016. To get there would cost £20k-£30k. (Spent £45k of £80k). We will also need to do additional wider consultations with church and local community.

If we followed the natural pattern we could be ready to commence building in Easter 2017 (this is the earliest we can start). We could also move out in Easter 2018 if fundraising takes two years.

We have laid a foundation on which the decision can be made. Is there enough information now to make the decision? We need to ask...

- Is there enough detail?
- Is there enough ideas?
- Have we asked the church family?
- Do we have enough focus?

By Easter 2016, the PCC would be able to interrogate these questions further.

Questions were invited:

Q. What would the additional £20k-£30k be spent on?

A. Mostly architect fees, some project management. We have now done a Mechanical and Electrical Engineering review.

Q. I understand the need for consultation, but if we start fundraising and got all we need, would there be a way to bring forward the start date?

A. Need to know what's in the process to draw.

Q. Are we in danger of losing those who are keen?

A. Could be counter-productive to run too fast ahead.

PL reflected that when Tony Miles first talked about RENEW, many didn't engage because it was thought it wouldn't happen. Only a few months ago, PL began to feel that the church family were on board, but now things seem to have shifted again. Either more people have emerged who have concerns or something else has happened. How do we manage those parts of the church family who are raw while there are some who are fully engaged? PL has been surprised by those who believe consultation has been weak. How do we manage not losing momentum, while addressing those who are agitated and have concerns?

Q A member reflected that there is a worry that the spiritual renewal is not going at the same pace as the building design. What are we doing about preparing people for leaving the church building? Another member expressed excitement for an outward looking building that can also help people grow spiritually.

A. Always a problem of trying to manage lots of people at the same time. Consulting without lots of information is not helpful. The RENEW Team have tried to get to the place of having something serious to talk about first. Now is the time for proper consultation.

Roberto reflected briefly on the visits the he and Suzanne have carried out so far. Most people have expressed concern about RENEW but at a level that most, with time, could be brought around. People visited where chosen at random with approx. 50% of visits to people from the 10.45 congregation and 50% from the other services. Glad to see process is being slowed down to give time to explain and get more people on board.

PL reflected that alongside the legislative the pastoral side needs more time. Roberto will discuss with the team and come back to PCC with recommendations of how this can be done.

Concern was expressed about getting the timing right. Comments have been made that suggest we are being rushed and concerned we are moving out next year. Need to take time to make sure everything is in place and time is not wasted. Communication is vital. Organ/office plans were handled in a way that led to increased concerns.

It was agreed that we need to be clear that NO decisions have been made.

It was also noted that communication needs to be stronger.

The huge amount of work undertaken is commended but we need to use the next four months to get communication right. There are significant parts of the plan where details cannot yet be put forward. People need to understand the process so they feel part of it.

PL summarised that the meeting were agreed that communication is key but if we stall sending informal consultation to DAC, when they are asking for more detail/have objections, this will result in more delays.

3 things struck from Chris's presentation

- Communication
- Time

- Prayer

A reflection was shared that the design work and the consultation with the church family both need further work. The design work has gone ahead at a faster pace and left many in the church family behind. We now have a season in which to get communication and vision right, while recognising the need to avoid losing momentum. The Potential is amazing but need time to get things right with church family.

Communications – the meeting agreed that:-

- We need to leave this meeting with a clear message to communicate to the Church family.
- Sundays need to become the key opportunity to communicate RENEW matters.
- We need to ensure that the Church family know that the feedback from the survey of the local community was positive.
- Emails that have been sent to individual PCC members regarding the RENEW should be forwarded to Jan Tyrell/LC so that all comments can be included.
- Need to give a clear message on the options for the organ: These include removing pipe organ and replace with digital instrument and rebuild pipe organ on top of village Hall (pipes would be placed either side of West window).

It was clear that the concerns expressed within the church family are also reflected in the PCC.

Summary: We know there will be a delay. Let's make sure the delay is used to communicate properly. We need a letter to church family explaining where we are and what is coming next, and emphasising that no decisions have been made on any aspect. By Christmas the PCC needs to be satisfied it has a process for communicating.

After much discussion PL asked if the meeting had enough information to go ahead on this scheme; to ask church family what they think, continue consultations with the community etc. and to develop the vision to approach to DAC and other statutory bodies?

It was proposed by Tim Meathrel, seconded by David Daniels that we agree to a fuller consultation with church family and wider consultations with the community with a view to approach to DAC at the earliest opportunity. Carried Unanimously.

Thanks were expressed to Leighton Carr and the RENEW Team for their work.

STANDING ITEMS

- 1. Minutes of PCC Meeting 21st September 2015 - Approved**
- 2. Matters Arising - none raised**

- 3. Finance Report** – 9 month accounts will be sent to PCC for review. No significant changes from 6 month position.
- 4. Wardens Points** – none raised
- 5. Paul's Points** – none raised
- 6. Operations Managers Points** – none raised
- 7. Safeguarding** – no matter raised

The meeting closed with prayer at 1.15pm