

A Message from the Parish Finance Committee

Sale of Parish Land

The sale of the land for housing development adjacent to the Church and the School has now been completed. We are aware that some parishioners have been concerned that more information has not been given to them earlier, but it is essential in any sale of this kind that confidentiality is maintained throughout the negotiations, in order not to jeopardise the position with the Developer, and the amount received from the sale.

It was established during the legal processes for the sale, that the land was actually held in two separate trusts. One straight forwardly in the Diocesan Trust and the other in a separate Trust set up in 1838 now held in the names of three Priest Trustees. Unfortunately two of these priests have died and the third is now retired and in his 80s, so it was necessary to appoint new Trustees in order to proceed with the sale. Inevitably this delayed the sale until the new Trustees were appointed and they now include our Parish Treasurer.

As part of the sale, the Developer has added the proceeds of the profit of one plot and is also providing a quiet memorial garden area for Parishioners adjacent to the Presbytery garden. The total proceeds now received and paid into the two Trusts amounts to over £2m. Under English Law this money belongs to the Diocese, but under Canon Law it belongs to the Parish. However, in order to fulfil the requirements of English Law, the Diocesan Trustees have to approve any expenditure before any of the proceeds can be spent.

Parishioners will be aware that the Hall is in a very poor state and requires major refurbishment. We have to maintain the building and continue its use in the future since it is a “listed building”. We have already had preliminary discussions with the Diocesan Property Officers in order to draw up a scheme for this necessary work. We are engaging Architects to advise and draw up plans for the essential work and implement improvements.

When we have a more detailed scheme for this work we will consult with Parishioners on our proposals.

In order to carry out these major works it will be necessary to completely close the Hall to **all** users during the period of the works. It would be unsafe to continue its use whilst major works and improvements are being carried out.

Several members of the Parish Finance Committee have given their professional services willingly and in a voluntary capacity during the sale of the land and the drawing up of a schedule of works and improvements, and this support has been particularly appreciated by the Diocese during a period of sickness of their staff.

We thank Parishioners for their patience during the lengthy and confidential negotiations and trust that the final outcome will be “worth the wait”.

Parish Finance Committee, 25 May 2017