

## Major Redevelopment of the Hall/Social Centre Survey of Parish Views – Summary Report

During June and July the parish conducted a survey. It asked

- do you agree that our Hall and Social Centre are in need of major redevelopment,
- is now the time to go about any such redevelopment, and
- are you ready to play your part in raising funds for any such redevelopment?

The survey also asked a number of more detailed questions, and sent a similar questionnaire to groups in our parish which use the Hall and Social Centre.

251 parishioners and 16 groups completed the survey. This report summarises results from the survey and sets out some conclusions as to next steps.

<u>Highlight Results from the Survey - Individuals</u>		
Topic	Result	Comment
Estimated response rate	Just over one-third of all parishioners	Probably a good response for such surveys
Do you agree that our Hall and Social Centre are in need of major redevelopment?	Agree      63% Not Sure    16% Disagree    21%	An Agree:Disagree ratio of 3:1 is a strong vote for significant work to be done.
Reasons for disagreeing	Over ¾ of the 21% who Disagree gave their reasons: - we should not be spending large sum of money      91% - we should be content to use what we have              55% - the Hall used to be our church – it should be preserved    36%	
Is now the time?	Yes          51% Not Sure    22% No            27%	Main concerns: effect of economic situation on ability to raise funds, and/or saddling the parish with a large debt.
Are you prepared to contribute your fair share?	Yes          60% No            40%	Not as positive as it seems – nearly ¼ of respondents did not answer this question.
Are you prepared to be part of a fund-raising team?	Yes          40% No            60%	The higher No vote does not mean people will not support fund-raising organized by others.
How good are particular aspects of Hall/Social Centre?	Toilets were worst-rated. Storage, Meeting Rooms and Kitchen also got Fair to Poor average ratings	
Current uses of Hall/Social Centre important to you?	Supporting our young people got highest votes. Parish meetings of various sorts also all rated highly.	
Possible future uses/facilities?	Supporting young people top-rated. Improved Kitchen facilities also voted Important on average.	
Opportunities in a redevelopment	Most were for improved or new facilities and helping us come together better as a community.	
Concerns in a redevelopment	Greatest number of concerns related to costs in various ways; also significant worries about disruption to activities during development.	

Some of the other themes from the individual returns from the survey are:

- “difficult to comment without specific (costed) proposals”;
- “with facilities designed for all age groups . . . improve the use of the Centre . . . a vibrant place . . . welcome old and new parishioners . . . help local community.”
- “what would be a ‘fair share’ of the costs?”;
- “prefer redevelopment of existing Hall/Centre to complete rebuild”;
- “a big project mustn’t squeeze out our more important general Christian mission”;
- caretaking, cleaning, maintenance, security are ongoing issues;
- there will never be a “perfect time” to start this so we may as well start now.

<u>Results – Groups</u>	
Need for redevelopment/ timing/ fund-raising	Similar results to Individuals. Majority of Groups favour redevelopment, agree now is the right time and would play their part in fund-raising.
Particular concerns	Several larger Groups concerned about disruption during refurbishment. If problems aren't solved then some Groups, notably the Uniformed Groups and the Sequence Dancers, see their future at St James' being threatened.

Further information on both Individual and Group views is contained in the fuller report.

#### Concluding Comments

1. There is a strong message that parishioners and groups agree that substantial redevelopment of our Hall/Social Centre is needed.
2. There is significant willingness to pay a fair share of the costs and to raise funds.
3. But the numbers indicating unwillingness, or not registering a view at all, were also significant. The present economic situation was cited many times. And many expressed concern at the risk of saddling the parish with a large debt.
4. There is sufficient support for redevelopment to conclude that there is a mandate to undertake investigations, by suitable professionals, e.g:
  - a. a surveyor to report to clarify the state of our premises (including our church itself) and assess likely costs of necessary refurbishments over the next 10 (say) years;
  - b. an architect to produce three illustrative development alternatives for the Hall/Social Centre (moderate redevelopment, substantial redevelopment and rebuild). The aim – get an idea of what we might get for our money.
5. Such work would not commit us, other than the cost of obtaining these investigations. Until we have received and considered the investigations there is no mandate to proceed beyond that.
6. The Scoping Team recommends that, if we do decide to go ahead with a substantial redevelopment, the parish resolves that it first raises sufficient funds to cover 75% of the costs before any building/alteration is undertaken. So if there is a decision to proceed there will be plenty of time to finalise details while the process of saving goes on.
7. Planning for any redevelopment should include giving the most serious consideration to the needs of parishioners and groups while work progresses, with minimum disruption to parish life and activities.

The parish survey results will be described more fully, with parishioners able to add further comments, at a Parish Forum meeting in the Hall at 8pm on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October.

The complete report (over 20 pages) on the survey can be viewed via the home page on our website, which also tells you how to access all the responses to the survey. Or request a copy of the complete report from Austin Barradell – phone 01689 837293.

The Scoping Team

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