

**Project Inspire**  
**Notes of Consultation Meeting**  
Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023  
St Lawrence Church

Notes: this record is not verbatim but is a fair record of discussions during this event. A recording was also made for the record. Text in [...] for clarity explains the point that was made. The list of those present is contained in [Appendix A – List of Attendees](#). There were 59 present plus 9 members of the Restoration and Reordering Project Group; 6 apologies for absence were received.

**Part 1 Introduction using slides**

19.30 the meeting was opened by AC with a welcome and use of the prayer published on the back page of the project funding brochure. The programme for the evening was set out.

*Note - Reference should be made to the separate PowerPoint (PPT) presentation for details of slides etc referenced when explaining aspects of this project and the current status.*

Nigel Jones (NJ) was introduced and continued the explanation of salient aspects of the scheme using the PPT

Richard Codd (RC) (architect) was introduced to the meeting. RC explained that we are presenting Design Stage 3 proposals. This was noted on the PPT.

NJ outlined the electrical and mechanical aspects such as the air source heat pumps (ASHP), lighting etc.

David Turtle (DT) gave a comprehensive summary of the finances of the scheme such as costs, sources of funds etc.

NJ explained the next steps, planning permission for external elements being sought from Cotswold District Council (ASHP and sheds), the pledge weekend, external fundraising. A best estimate of timescales was given for securing permissions and for the completion of work.

**Part 2 A break for refreshments was made**

**Part 3 Question and answer session**

*Note – again the thrust of questions and answers has been recorded rather than a verbatim record made.*

**Qu 1** How will the chancel be heated?

**A** Individual heaters will be provided as the floor cannot be dug up.

**Qu 2** What is happening with the choir screen?

**A** This is one area where there is a difference of opinion. We are keen to remove it for liturgical and architectural reasons and to avoid foreshortening of the church. A strong case has been made and there has been pushback [from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC)]. More work is being done to persuade the DAC and the Chancellor.

**Qu 3** Where will the screen go?

We had offered to put it at the back of the church on the gallery but this option was turned down by the DAC. There are different views of the screen such as being a barrier to worship, being an historical element of the Victorian reordering. The amenity societies want the church to remain as now.

**Qu 4** The floor – the tiles are an issue but they do not look very special.

**A** Our proposals are based on the views of our archaeologist; the tiles are not significant but another Victorian element and are simple quarry tiles. They will be left in place, a record made and then covered with the new floor. The chancel tiles remain as they are more significant. [NB in the opening remarks NJ had explained the term 'significant' in the context of features of the building.]

**Qu 5** Acoustics and sound system – important to have good speakers appropriately placed.

**A** Stated that several firms have visited and made proposals based on a detailed specification for the PA system including radio microphones and cable microphones, speakers in the chancel and a screen to drop down from the march; a projector will be mounted below the gallery and everything controlled from a tablet. Our electrical and mechanical consultants have the reports.

**Qu 6** Has the community at large given any feedback?

**A** The September 2021 - consultation with the whole community and a six week exhibition in church. We invited the community to make comments and 150 were received – overwhelming support for the project aims. Some disagreements but weight of opinions was positive.

**Qu 7** What is happening to the reredos in the chapel?

**A** Some feeling in the DAC that we should not lose all sense of worship here. The communion table will be moved back. The DAC's view of the reredos is that it is a catalogue item from 1947. The font will also be moved to the front of the church. The area can still be used for prayer etc.

**Qu 9** The trigger point in 2024 for work to start is dependent on pledges?

**A** The date depends on the process with the Church of England and fundraising. The plan re pledging is to get funds before work starts so we know it is there when we need it. After April we aim to have pledges which fill the shortfall and tell the DAC that this is a fully funded project. [Note re 'shortfall', see DTs slides about funds from sale of Cottage,

pledging and other sources.] There is a wedding planned for June 2024 but no further bookings being taken. We expect to be out of the church for up to 12 months and are looking at services in various places.

**Qu 10** Is there a difference between pledges and donations? Some of us may not be here – can donations be made in advance?

**A** If people wish to donate now, we would be happy to receive donations. The idea of the pledges is to say that the project is fully funded. The real emphasis is to have commitment from the community to enable the project to go ahead. Interest will be earned so there is a benefit [of donations now]. Other churches have found that pledges are better than promised.

**Qu 11** [Comment made that] donations in advance will sit in the Restoration Fund and even if the scheme doesn't go ahead we still need to rewire etc. [Comment had been made earlier that we still need to tackle elements such as heating, floor, wiring.]

**A** Yes, funds will still be used as intended.

**Qu 12** I have worked in historic buildings for many years and have advocated change but the project has a profound lack of appreciation of the Grade 1 listed building. Have we managed feedback from amenity societies [listed some e.g. Historic England and the Victorian Society], the guardians of heritage...have give scathing feedback of the scheme [read a quotation]. I fear alienation of people in the community as these views are not recognised. A harmful and damaging position is facing this building.

**A** [Explained DAC members] – DAC comments as well as amenity groups {examples of these groups who responded were given} and we commented on them. Quite a lot of comments were made and the DAC asked us to address them – we have done so. The DAC has to balance heritage versus mission and worship. The Chancellor makes the final decision taking into account the DAC and amenity society advice. The DAC having to balance views and mission and worship but DAC still supports the scheme. Chedburn Codd [project architects] have experience of listed buildings. It is about managing change. The scheme has been developed in a sympathetic way acknowledging historic building needs. A sympathetic approach taken. We feel this the right approach to give a future as a place of worship. Managing change and harm to give the right future. The photo on page 4 [of the funding brochure] shows how the church has changed over the years – organ on the gallery, box pews etc. The church had been used for 350 years before the screen came. Constantly evolving but recognition of need to manage history.

[Response by person posing question] – this is not what the amenity societies are saying – not fit for any historic church.

[Comment from PCC member] – the project has been 5 years in the running. A long time has been taken to progress. I have read every line of every report and the PCC has considered every point the amenity societies have made. One respondent has not even visited the building and got our name wrong [in their submission]. Others visited and understood the scheme. [ideas such as] pews on castors and keeping the tiles. I understand their passion for historic buildings but we have a different passion – to see Jesus preached and have a building fit for purpose. The amenity societies preach at us from far away and are not part of this community but some could not come to see it. Must

remember what the building is for. As a trustee, responsibilities are recognised and am happy with what Project Inspire and the architect have done.

[Spontaneous round of applause from attendees.]

[Further response from person posing the question] - This Grade 1 building belongs to everyone in the national community and is protected and should be cherished and the quality enhanced. Narrow outlook to say it belongs to this community. It is one of 2.5% of historic buildings in the country.

**Qu 13** The PCC supports as does almost every member of this church. Extremely important that every member supports this when it goes to the DAC. What suggestions are there for supporting the proposals? The protection of the building is not as important as the people here. What is the best way?

**A** When we make a submission [petition] for a faculty to the DAC, the DAC makes a recommendation to the Chancellor. Under law we put a notice on the door for 30 days [28 in fact] for anyone to comment whether +ve or -ve. This will probably be later this year and we encourage people to write in. The Chancellor looks at comments and makes a judgement. He is a barrister in ecclesiastical law and balances the needs of the church, worship, mission and potential harm to buildings and we accept his view. Any party can object to the judgement.

**Qu 14** Page 8 drawings – area at the back of the church – what materials?

**A** There will be a steel frame, an independent structure. The ground floor will have a natural timber cladding and there will be glazing and an oak handrail. Manifestations used on glass.

**Qu 15** Have visits been made to churches where alterations have been put in and on the whole have they enhanced [the buildings] – not looking for extremes but [where done] sensitively. Has the team visited Grade 1 and 2 churches with changes? Photos of examples to limit alarm would be useful

**A** We have visited many churches nearby and further away. In general, improvements have been really good e.g. Bouton on the Water which gave us some ideas. In one or two we wondered how they got DAC approval. Looked at good examples e.g. St Phillip & St James in Cheltenham and Minchinhampton.

**Qu 16** Quite shocked by what [person asking Qu 12] said as here. Not of one mind – amenity societies and us; will the gap be closed? Not fit for purpose – a broad statement – any specifics? Floor materials?

**A** [Response by person asking Qu 12] speaking informally here as the state of the floor is limited to one specific issue. [Person asking Qu 12] feels passionate but understands aspirations. When the Victorians took away Georgian elements this opened up the east end (sic) [discussion then focussed on west end]. Look at west end, an accomplished piece of work. All will be obscured – see the artist's visualisations; won't be able to appreciate architectural elements - just one example.

AC comment – we looked at doing things outside and inside but DAC said to do it inside. Top quality materials and design used. RC confirmed that anything outside is a no-no if it can go inside.

**Qu 17** When we had all the groups coming together with ideas, obvious not all will get what they want so we have to go with that. Just have to accept and go with the Chancellors views.

**A** AC – let’s try to see this through and pray for God’s blessing on it.

**Qu 18** [Comment from attendee] – Thanks go to NJ, architects and Project inspire team for all their hard work especially during Covid. {general support for this from the attendees.]

The meeting ended with Grace and an invitation to speak to the architect or to NJ.

## Appendix A – List of Attendees

Rev Andrew Cinnamon (Vicar)  
Nigel Jones  
Paul Cobb (CW)  
Richard Bell  
David Turtle

### Project Inspire Group

Rev Gareth Griffith (Curate)  
Richard Codd  
Shirley White  
Simon Morris

Rosie Emerson  
Shirley Bell  
David White  
Mary Bainbridge  
Gordon Vallance  
Drew Cinnamon  
Susan Holmes (CW)  
Margaret Watkins  
Gordon Land  
Sue Rudge  
Karin Foreman  
Kathy Newton  
Dianna Hibbert  
Colin Dowdeswell  
Tim Morris  
Jenni Akroyd  
Paul Larsen  
Simon Paul  
Kate Cinnamon  
Mary Williams  
Liz Vaughan  
Mike Bennett  
David Sharpe  
Sally Owen  
Jean Brown  
Andrew Kirk  
Vicky Jones  
Ginette James  
Sophie Bath  
Lucy Ming

### Church/community

Gill Turtle  
Lesley Uzzell  
David Bainbridge  
Sanfra Hoaksey  
Lyn Collier  
Barry Jones  
Geoff Holmes  
Marion Winckles  
Margaret Bettis  
Ian Hurst  
Andrew Foreman  
David Newton  
Tania Dowdeswell  
Niki Morris  
Richard Akroyd  
Mike ward  
Gilian Kirk  
David Williams  
Tessa Cobb  
Liz Benson  
Sheila Bennett  
Brian Rudge  
Julie Sharpe  
Mike Adams  
Sheila Cooper  
Paul Jones  
Anne-Marie Probert  
Rachael Bath  
David Corris

Apologies were received from:

Barbara McNaught, John McNaught, Denver Keegan, Mike Keegan, Karen Akers, Helen Lawrence.