

St James' Parish Church, Teignmouth



Preparing for the next 200 years by renovation and reordering...

Introduction

This is the first of a series of (not so regular) briefing papers intended to keep the congregation at St James' aware of work to fix defects in the building and make changes in the church and churchyard so that both are ready to carry forward the mission of the church in West Teignmouth. We also hope that open communications like this will clarify where we are on the various projects and avoid the spread of misinformation.

The Objective

The objective of all the work described here is **“to provide a flexible and accessible worship space within St James' that can be easily converted for wider community use, whilst retaining its primary purpose as a Christian church.”**

Nave Ceiling & Main Roof

The PCC have agreed to seek approval from the Archdeacon to open the ceiling to investigate the source of water ingress. Together, Grant Elliott (Architect) and West Access Conservation, also have a new theory that water ingress might be occurring at the flashing at the hips in the main roof, and will roll the flashing back to check that the slates are seated correctly. The PCC hope that these investigations will take place later this summer.

West Access will also secure a temporary solution to prevent further falls of plasterwork.

Lantern

The lantern was inspected by the architect and specialist conservation joiners a few weeks ago. Their reports indicate that, although repairs of varying effectiveness have been carried out in the past, the current state of the lantern is now beyond further ad-hoc interventions and requires full scale renovation. This will require scaffolding access in the centre of the nave and is likely to take 10 months or more. The indicative estimate from the architect indicates a total project cost of approaching £360K. We should probably assume that we're looking at, say, £400K for this work. There is no start date for this work at present.

Internal Reordering & South Porch

Rev'd Carol will be holding an open afternoon on Tuesday, 5 Sep 2023 to share thoughts on internal reordering, and our wider plans, with anyone who would listen, and as part of engaging the community before we seek architect input/design. This is expected to include Mark Green's conceptual 3D designs, and presentations of progress to date.

A Massive Programme of Works

In the light of the cost of the lantern works, the PCC is now minded to sweep up all the major works into a single Programme to enable us to apply for grants for the programme or individual projects as this will provide context for grant funders so that they understand what we're trying to achieve. Grant funders prefer this approach rather than being asked for small pots of money for individual pieces of work. This approach will also make it easier for us to define "outcomes" of what the full reordering and repairs are all about!

So, the full programme would probably include:

- Lantern
- Main roof & nave ceiling
- New South porch
- Internal reordering
- Redecoration of nave

How much will it cost?

Based on what we've seen from the lantern estimate, we imagine that the full programme cost is likely to be in the order of £1,000,000, although we won't know the full cost until we've fully defined all the projects in the Programme. And when all is said and done, it's probably as easy to raise a million pounds in grants as it is half that amount if we target the right source.

Where will the money come from?

We would expect to get most of the money for this project from a number of grant funders who might include: National Lottery, National Churches Trust, Benefact Trust, the Devon Historic Churches Trust, and others.

It is the general understanding that projects need to raise around 20% of the project costs from their own resources. In the case of this programme we would expect to use a mixture of regular income, reserves, and fundraising.

The reductions in our Common Fund request over recent years have largely dealt with our regular annual overspend of around £10K or so but it still needs to be borne in mind that the using our reserves for this work will result in a reduction in our income of around £6,000 each year.

Getting ready & decluttering:

War Memorial Flags

Disposal of the war memorial flags has been suspended for the moment so that, if they are to be removed and disposed of, it is with the blessing of the Chancellor of the Diocese, and as part of the wider vision.

Hassocks (Kneelers)

Disposal of those kneelers which were initially deemed to be surplus to our requirements has been paused by the PCC pending further consultation.

Surplus furniture

Under Rev'd Carol's guidance, a PCC sub-group have identified several items of furniture that are currently considered to be redundant and will be removed to the balcony room for storage, pending a decision on their disposal as part of the internal reordering.

More information is on display in the church.

Other projects

An Illuminated Cross on the Tower

The PCC have resolved to install an illuminated cross on the West face of the tower, where it will be a witness to our commitment to Christ, and clarification that this unique building is a Christian Church (and has been for the greater part of a thousand years!).

Grant Elliot and the team at Le Page Architects have put together three Proposal options for the PCC (and the Church) to consider before moving to the next stage of design and costing. Details of these options are on display in the church.

Please feedback your preferences and comments to Anna Venables or Andy Harding.

Car Parking in the Churchyard

This project is currently "on hold" pending further engagement with the community, as informal feedback suggested resistance for a variety of, sometimes conflicting, reasons.

So, can we do this?

The simple answer is "Not on our own!". This is a massive programme of work but we recall Jesus' words: "with God all things are possible".

Although we might feel helpless and overwhelmed by the scale of this undertaking it is essential that each of us play our part by supporting every stage of the programme in prayer: the planning, designing, fundraising and the work itself; as well as all those who will use the church in the future.

