

Redevelopment Plans – Issue 1

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Good News!

Everybody's welcome!

Do you remember the 'Everybody Welcome' course that we ran a year ago now? The course generated fresh energy and commitment to make St Matthias' an even more welcoming place, seeking to model God's welcome to each person.



As a result we began the new Welcome Teams for our Sunday services. We've run two Alpha courses. We've tried to make families with younger children welcome and the new Breakfastzone service is part of that. And the good news is that God is enabling us to grow – we're growing fast!

This fact, coupled with the existing overcrowding of the Larkin Hall for Prayzone (which means that we really should be moving this service into the larger space of the church to allow it to continue to expand) helped the PCC to recognise that we need to make changes to the interior of the church.

We need the seating to be more flexible, more comfortable, and to have more desperately needed storage. We also recognise that to improve the sound quality and visibility better as we would like, we can only do this with more modern equipment.

The 'Everybody Welcome' course also enabled us to appreciate how 'dead' the exterior of the church doors look and there was a widespread consensus to explore how we might open up the west end doorways and glaze them, so that the church interior could be appreciated by passers-by and seen to be as alive as thank God, we are!

So, last autumn the PCC began to explore solutions for this "problem" of growth. Having seen some initial ideas provided last year through the

kindness of two architects, the PCC decided to commission a suitable architect to come up with some draft plans.

Two other events encouraged this to go ahead. Last year, the 'Friends of St Matthias' were given a very large donation to use on a major project in the church.

Secondly, the day that cheque was received, God spoke to me through the morning prayer readings about King Joash who insisted that the money that had been collected to repair the temple should be used immediately and not sat on for years....a reading that cropped again only a few weeks later...(2 Kings 12 & 2 Chronicles 24).

So where have we got to?

After meeting with three architect firms, a PCC working party was unanimously in favour of beginning work with Mr Alex Coppock, of 'Communion Architects'¹. At present he is working on first draft plans to bring back to this working party at the end of June.

We hope that these draft ideas can be discussed with the church planning authorities in September (the 'Diocesan Advisory Committee' or 'DAC'). Until then we will not know whether any of these ideas are even possible. So, it's going to take some time before we can look at any details more widely as a church, as we will want to.

But clearly these are ambitious plans – which mean expensive plans!

Please keep praying for the church leadership, and about your own role, as we grow and seek to continue to grow - to make disciples, and so that together with the Lord we can transform communities here and abroad, and grow in depth of worship too.

Pray too for a love and generosity in the church family as we go on this journey of change, which is bound to challenge us in different ways.

Thank you for playing your part in making everybody welcome for Jesus!

Yours in Christ, John

¹ <http://communionarchitects.com/>

Key ideas we are looking into:

- Redesign West end to improve accessibility, a more welcoming entrance, a larger space at the back of the church and provide storage, crèche area, & a small kitchenette.
- Replace existing seating to improve comfort & the layout of the church
- Upgrade audio-visual provision in the church
- Glass in Francis Chapel and upgrade lighting
- Consider how best to use the Chancel once again for smaller services