

## Summary of parish meeting 12 Dec 2021

Meeting was opened by Fr Gerry with a prayer.

Margaret Swift welcomed everyone

Yvonne Ripley explained the procedure and purpose of the meeting:

- Speakers to have 5 mins
- Discussion after each speaker - not a Q&A session
- Long process – nothing is being done in a rush
- There will be future opportunities to ask questions
- Journeying and being together, listening to each other in fellowship, trying to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us

Main points of each presentation as follows: (notes taken from their presentations)

**PLEASE NOTE THE FULL VIDEO OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE:**

<https://www.stannes.gbr.cc/>

**Bruce Thomson** – ‘Why selling the community centre is dangerous thing to do’

- Summary of what has happened with the community centre
- 2014, the state the centre was in and the grants obtained. Vision to be – self-sustaining/revenue generating
- 2016: Quinquennial review highlighted work needed to all buildings
- 2017: meeting held to discuss poor financial situation. Suggestions include to continue with centre improvements, grant income to possible fund
- 2018: Financial report – starting to improve
- 2019: Fr Dennis’ legacy for church improvements Presbytery improvements from parish
- 2021: where are we today?
- Ideas and suggestions for the centre
- Proposals for the centre presented
- What has been spent on the centre – over £71,000 invested by other organisations (from 2014) + £3,000 for Sunday Club
- Going forward - what does the centre do for us? Poor reputation/image of Catholic Church within the community/loss of goodwill within Buxton community if we sell
- Not a financial burden
- Downsizing - where is the financial burden in the parish? Numbers attending church continue to decline. What will our numbers be in 75yrs time? Need to get First Communicant parents in to church, sign a standing order.

**Nicola Barnes** on behalf of Mike Monaghan (full comments on website)

- We should widen our discussions at some stage to address the issues affecting the church overall and not just our parish
- Consider why 90% of people raised as Catholics no longer practice

## Clare O’Neill

- Church and hall are 2 separate issues – do people want to change the church?
- Current hirers of the centre are becoming worried and looking for somewhere else to meet
- How will the decision be made?
- In relation to COVID, is this the best time to make changes?

Options:

1. Clare and small consortium would rent the building on a ‘percentage lease’ basis: rent to cover repairs etc costs of the landlord. When the profit reaches a certain amount, a percentage of the profit is paid to the landlord. Good ‘vibe’ in the centre/good venue. Make it into an ‘arts centre’
2. Employ someone to manage the venue
3. PPC to keep the centre, formulate their own plan using a structured set of volunteers to run it
4. Community buy-out – using grant income from the community. Grants are available. Parish would lose control of the centre. Our parishioners built the hall for the community to use, it is important to the community and they use it

Clare is happy to pad out option 1 and produce a business plan

**Paul Ripley:** (full written comments on website)

Parish/deanery/diocese exciting and vital role to play ensuring our faith meets the challenges of the future, locally, nationally and internationally. Future is uncertain

- a. Church numbers are falling
- b. Most of our parishioners are elderly
- c. Young people do not appear to be interested in the faith, but they are morally sound, compassionate, and caring
- d. Church finances, not least in our Parish, are not good.
- e. We have a shortage of Priests and Deacons. This will not improve.
- f. Women are not being seriously considered.

How do we achieve change?

Look forward not back

Face difficult choices – short and long term - COP 26, refugees, finance

Who will lead us?

We have a committed community, schools, committed parishioners and volunteers, priest, deacon, beautiful church and community centre, we live in a town with strong commitment to Christian beliefs

We need to give more of ourselves to our church

How will we maintain our faith and community, work with other parishes, other faith groups, work for refugees?

**John Cooper:**

From the letters written by Lisa Cooper (on website):

*Letter 1*

Better to do things slowly

The Parish needs to be aware of the local PR implications of taking a town facility such as the Community Centre out of action when it has only very recently benefitted from a large local donation to refurbish it.

Could possibly be used for a refugee centre/alms housing?

Be careful of a private development – can lose as much as ½ or ⅔ of what you gain from the development

*Letter 2*

Lack of structure to the strategic planning discussions that the Parish appears to be rushing its' members through

Quality process is not quick, involves following 4 key stages:

1. Defining a Strategic Vision – comprising a shared view on mission and values
2. Setting a Strategic Direction (5 year plan)
3. Agreeing a business plan with objectives (setting out what will be done in Year 1)
4. Producing business cases in support of individual projects outlined in the business plan e.g. development of the Community Centre

Need to:

Slow the current process down, concentrate on doing stages 1 and 2 well and in line with Diocesan timetables

Initiate work on the likely requirements of a future business case for the Centre (subject to bridging finance for the Centre being available) e.g. investigating letting/management options, considering a range of development opportunities.

**Jim Lunney:**

An imaginative proposal

What would Jesus do?

Need to keep church/centre development separate from Synodal process

Need principles to underpin any development:

1. Produce both a business and social return  
Project should attempt to be a win/win by achieving an ethical social purpose, of benefit for the parish in terms of the facilities retained, without creating an administrative, financial and managerial burden for the parish
2. Self-financing: should provide sufficient financial return to fully offset the cost of recommissioning the space within the church; any costs of the scheme need to be fully met by the income derived – perhaps the incorporation of an element of cross subsidy between different tenure types to allow sales of the property to offset the delivery of affordable housing

3. Address local housing need in the long term – working with LA to establish local connection criteria of eligibility for housing
4. Sustainability – in the development and long term maintenance and management of the property

Best way to achieve these aims:

Outsourcing both the development and the long term management of the property to a 'not-for-profit' housing provider enshrining the principles that the parish decides should be incorporated into binding agreements for both the development and management of the property in the long term.

Additional speakers:

**Sue Harman:**

Soul of the church

Interest in keeping the centre, inside and outside of the parish

Needs to be a quick decision to keep/sell – uncertainty will lead to people leaving

Sort out strategic things out once we've made a commitment

**Rose Gould:**

Loss of money since COVID

Doesn't want the church desecrated, might damage the church

But need somewhere to meet

**Rosemary Wood:**

Centre – lots to offer, should be kept

Big loss to town if sold

Improve church – if we want a lively, more user friendly church get rid of the pews and use chairs, more flexibility

Capital benefit to the church would be short sighted to lose the centre

**Yvonne:**

Feedback on suggestions/comments via email or written note through the presbytery door

**Margaret:**

Insightful comments and suggestions

Big decisions need to be thought about carefully

Need a separate meeting for the centre and for the Synod

This is not a 'done' deal. The decision will be made by the parish.

Next meeting – 16 Jan 2022 – to discuss what we shared about dreams, hopes and fears at the Nov meeting