

Personal summary of the parish meeting held on 12th Dec 2021 by Peter Barrett

Of ten verbal / written submissions three had concerns about the process. These included worries that the immediate focus on the Community Centre caused by the plans etc was distracting from the bigger synodal issues that the Church faces; and that we should not be starting the process with “solutions”. At the end of the meeting you addressed this by concluding that the discussion around the Centre should be carried forward via a separate meeting from the main synodal process.

The remaining seven submissions focused on the proposed plans for disposing of the Community Centre and creating a meeting space in the Church. The overwhelming thrust of these (six out seven) was that the sell-off of the Community Centre was a poor idea for a range of reasons, concerning negative impacts on various fronts: reputational, outreach, income-generating potential, etc. Beyond this, information was provided about the positive usage made of the Community Centre already (despite Covid impacts) and proposals were made for the active development of the Community Centre. However, these last depend on more information being made available about the current financial position. Concern about the changes to the Church were also raised. At the end of the meeting it was promised that the accounts for the Community Centre would be made available so that alternative business plans could be built up based on facts.

There were questions about where the process goes next and concerns that delay would mean that existing users would lose confidence in the light of the publicised sell-off proposal and start to look for other venues so leading to an unnecessary loss of business. Given the resulting urgency of the situation (create by the early publication of the plans) and the strong consensus to develop positive proposals to take forward and enhance the operation of the Community Centre, please confirm when the next meeting focused on the Community Centre will be.

When this meeting happens I hope that this record of the consensus already achieved will provide a basis for us to move strongly forward to making an early strategic decision.

Thank you

Peter Barrett