



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

serving Westerham, Brasted, Sundridge and Ide Hill

PARISH ROOM PROJECT– BULLETIN 4 4th October 2015

This is the fourth bulletin to be circulated to parishioners to inform you of progress being made with the Parish Room Project. It follows the joyous news that planning permission has been granted by Sevenoaks District Council to build the parish room. The period for consideration of our planning application, which was submitted in February, was protracted. There were several false dawns, but thanks to the tremendous support of parishioners, your prayers and our convincing *“Very Special Circumstances”* amendment to the application, both Westerham Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council finally gave their support.

Since receiving planning permission the Parish Room Steering Committee has met to plan the next steps. We have prices to build the parish room as we obtained tenders earlier in the year and so we will now progress the negotiation of a contract to build it. As we informed parishioners in a previous bulletin, the tenders were higher than expected and consequently, the overall forecast cost has been increased to £220,000. In order to fund the project, we have secured an interest free loan from the Diocese for £90,000, which will have to be repaid in annual instalments over the next 10 years, and we have approximately £30,000 available from existing funds and fundraising activities to date.

Consequently, we are seeking £100,000 in donations from parishioners including gift aid tax relief. We will, in due course, be undertaking other fundraising activities, but these will be focussed on the repayment of the loan.

A letter will shortly be sent to parishioners to ask you to donate, and to donate generously. Responses are requested by 15th November 2015. If we receive the funds needed to award a contract, then we plan to start work in the New Year with completion in June. If we do not receive sufficient funds by then, we will review our funding strategy and seek to fill the gap, but this would probably mean a delay to the start of construction and possibly an inflationary increase in the costs. We are, nevertheless, optimistic that with your generosity the funds will be raised given the level of pledges already received and the number of people who have said they will donate.

The design is unchanged from the original illustrations in the first bulletin with no connection to the presbytery and, therefore corresponds to the design submitted with the planning application. The original illustrations are included with this bulletin. The Parish Room Steering Committee will, however, review the internal details to ensure that the facilities are appropriate for the parish needs.

Please continue to pray and to support the project so that we have this wonderful facility available to our thriving parish of St John the Baptist next year.



