



**St. John the Baptist Catholic Church**

serving Westerham, Brasted, Sundridge and Ide Hill

# Parish Room Project

**BULLETIN 1**

**15 February 2015**



This is the first of a number of bulletins, which will be circulated to parishioners to inform them of progress being made with the Parish Room Project.

At the end of Masses on the weekend of 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> January, presentations were given on the proposals for the Parish Room and a leaflet was handed out to parishioners that included a questionnaire. The questionnaire asked four questions and invited comments. The four questions and the responses received were as follows:

		Yes	No
<b>1</b>	Do you support the plan to build a Parish Room?	75	1
<b>2</b>	Would you be prepared to write to Sevenoaks District Council in support of the planning application when it has been submitted?	62	6
<b>3</b>	Would you be prepared to make a donation to the parish room when parishioners are invited to do so?	67	1
<b>4</b>	Would you be prepared to be involved in fundraising activities?	53	12

The Parish Room Steering Committee, which met on the 26th January, was delighted with the above response and the favourable remarks made on the proposals. At the meeting the comments received were reviewed and the key conclusions from them were as follows:

- a) It was suggested that it would be desirable to include an enclosed porch and it was agreed that this would be a good idea (*see illustration on front of this leaflet*).

- b) Suggestions had been made to re-orientate the building and to allow for future extension at the back. The Committee discussed this but the incline of the site prevents future extension at the rear and the current orientation is preferable.
- c) Points were raised about aspects of the layout of the facilities at the back and the fact that the kitchen was open plan. The committee discussed them and agreed to keep the points under review as the design developed.
- d) Concerns were expressed that costs might rise and that the parish room might be too much of a drain on parish finances. Both of these concerns were recognised and it was agreed that both needed to be carefully reviewed as the project progressed.
- e) It was suggested that the parish room was unnecessary as the church could be used for meetings and parish functions. This was rejected as the church was not considered to be either a suitable or an adequate venue for such functions.
- f) One person did not support unnecessary expenditure on buildings and felt that the money would be put to better use in the third world. This concern was understood, but the committee believed that having a parish room was important in order to strengthen the Catholic community and hence the parish would be better placed to support charities such as CAFOD in the longer term.

As an overall conclusion, the Steering Committee felt that the Parish had given overwhelming support to the project and the proposed design (*75 in favour and only 1 against*). As a consequence, a Planning Application (**reference: SE/15/00367/FUL**) has been submitted to Sevenoaks District Council with the full support of the Diocese and is now on the Council's website ([www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)). Over 60 people have said they will write to Sevenoaks DC giving their support and they are now encouraged to do so. This can be done either online via the Council's website or by sending a letter to Sevenoaks District Council, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG or by email to [planning.comments@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:planning.comments@sevenoaks.gov.uk) quoting the above application reference number.

Our architect, Martin Bush, has been asked to progress the detailed design and specification so that quotations can be obtained from prospective builders. It is hoped that in early April, we will have both an acceptable firm price for building the Parish Room and will have been granted planning permission. If we have both, we will then launch the fundraising and seek your generosity (67 people have said that they will make a donation and over 50 have said they will help with the fundraising). Finally, we would like to start the building work in July. This is, of course, dependent on the necessary funds being in place and we are optimistic that this is achievable.

Success will depend on a number of milestones being reached, but with your prayers and support, we hope that we might have a wonderful new Parish Room by Christmas.