

## The Parish Hall Improvement Project

### Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 22/04/21

March 2020 saw Lockdown begin and it meant any meetings about the improvement of the Parish Hall needed to move online. Jane Olds, the Parish Council clerk, set up a Zoom link and the Working group began to hold virtual meetings from May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Working group was set up with representatives from The Parish hall Management committee, St Mary's PCC, Launton Parish Council and PHIP.

Last May we were presented with another cost of £900 plus VAT from the PCC solicitor and this led to further negotiations with Darren Oliver who is the Diocesan Chancellor and also a senior partner at Winckworth Sherwood. An agreement was worked out eventually that there would be no charges as long as work was purely administrative and kept to a minimum ( similar to what was decided in May 2019).

Alex Bond, the architect came out to the hall in March and took measurements and sent a report on the existing hall building. In this Alex says " there is no suggestion the structure is unsound, but the single skin walls pose a difficulty in terms of upgrading them. Other building components need to be replaced.....Buildings are never designed with the intention of having a finite life, but the reality is that most building components do have a limited duration before they need to be replaced."

Over the next few meetings the Working group came up with a "Wish List" of improvements to the hall, but until the Agreement to Lease is signed the Parish Council cannot engage Alex Bond for further work and so we cannot develop these plans in any more detail for now.

In August the documents were sent to Caroline Dyer who is the Trust administrator for the Oxford Diocese (Oxford) Limited, or DT(O)L, who hold the Parish Hall in trust for the PCC and will also be signatories to the legal documents. Caroline raised several errors in the documents such as DT(O)L being the named "landlord" as she doesn't want to be asked about the day to day running of the hall, and certain words being incorrect such as Diocesan secretary which should be Diocesan Property Manager as well as more serious questions about a "licence for alterations." This took several months to research and then the required changes had to be made to the documents which took us to January 2021.

Since then the documents have been sent back to the PCC solicitor and he has suggested a few more changes which we are now trying to do.

In August we held our postponed PHIP AGM via Zoom.

Before Lockdown we researched sources of funding including grant applications and now need actual architect's plans before we can proceed further.

We have also researched new tables and chairs and these have now been bought by the Parish Council with Section 106 money and delivered to the Parish Hall. We have 16 tables plus 2 larger tables with 2 table trolleys, and 60 blue plastic chairs with 2 chair trolleys for storage. The old blue tables will be removed and also some of the older plastic chairs.

PHIP has managed to do one fund raising event on July 11<sup>th</sup>, a cake stall was held outside the Parish hall and the money raised totalled £415 and was split between St Mary's Church and PHIP.

Jane Olds has successfully negotiated with East West Rail about repairing the potholes in the hall car park and this has improved the surface of the parking area. Joan Packer has also been obtaining quotes to get the dead tree on the hedge between the school and the hall car park cut down.

A Risk Assessment for the opening up of the hall has been put together by Rob Cornford and also supplies such as hand sanitisers and other equipment has been purchased to ensure when the hall is used it will have sufficient Covid mitigation measures in place. We have applied for a Covid Outbreak Management Fund Grant which would cover this cost.

Minor repairs have been done to the hall door and our thanks to all who look after the hall and especially to David Brind for mowing the grass and to Joan Packer for checking the building during lockdown and managing enquiries and bookings.

Our thanks to all members of the group for their time and attention to the hall and we look forward to signing the legal documents very soon. We will then move on to making detailed plans with the architect.

05/04/2021