



**Notes taken at the Public Meetings held on Tuesday 29th October 2019
and Thursday 31st October 2019 in St Andrew's Church, Kildwick.**

On October 29th, 52 people were present and on 31st, 35. An estimated six people were present for both meetings.

At both meetings, the Interim Vicar, the Revd Julie Bacon, welcomed everyone and introduced the panel for the evening: the two churchwardens, Lesley Hudson and Sandie Walton, Archdeacon Andy Jolley and Sue Booth, Diocesan Buildings for Mission Officer.

The evenings began with a presentation by Revd Julie Bacon. *(The text of this presentation and the text of a letter from Geraldine Sands, Chair of Governors at Kildwick School, are to be found at the end of these notes. The PowerPoint presentation is available on request.)*

There followed a short period of informal chatting over her presentation before Julie called us together again and asked for questions and comments.

Questions and comments from 29th October 2019

Q I've heard about school and the tourists being interested but who else is there? We need to know before we spend eye-watering amounts of money.

A (JB) We don't know. Creating space will encourage use; it's not sustainable for two hours once a week. School is an obvious user.

A (SB) Heritage and culture in this valley are very important; if this church is open it's an added attraction. Visitors will spend money in the pub and the local shops, creating prosperity and employment.

Q Speaking as the Treasurer of the Glusburn Institute, this sounds like a £0.5m project. There is a village hall up the street and so you need to be co-operative; I suggest you look at the successful church in Skipton (*Christ Church?*). Success breeds success so if things start well, they may go on. I would be disappointed if the space within the church changed.

A (JB) We need to find what people want and how they want to use the building.

Q How will the school want the building changed?

A (JB) We don't know – no detailed discussion has taken place yet. This meeting is to try and get a sense in principle of whether the community wants this building to continue.

Q How committed are you to this kind of seating (*pews*).

A (JB) Personally, not worried. However, we recognise that this is a contentious issue and the case for removing the pews would have to be made further down the line.

Q The Vicarage needs mentioning. If the School were to buy the Vicarage, the money could be spent on the roof.

A (AJ) There are two charities involved here: the church itself and a trust whose money is spent on clergy housing. The school would need to make an offer to the Diocese of Leeds for the building. The Diocese must get the best value out of the Vicarage to use the money for its charitable purposes. Unfortunately it is not able to use that money on the church building. The Diocese invests approximately £30k per year in the parish to enable its ministry to continue.

Q Three years ago I attended a similar meeting held here to discuss the future of the church and I am disappointed to hear there has been no real progress made. Where is the money to come from, given that the money from the sale of the Vicarage goes elsewhere? What is the Diocese prepared to contribute?

A (SB) The Diocese contributes £30k per annum to provide a clergy person. There are 630 churches in the Diocese of Leeds, all of whom have access to the expertise of me and my colleagues in Leeds and London. There is no magic money pit. The fact that people are here is a huge leap forward. Also, the grant landscape has changed very much.

A (JB) The meeting you mention was actually 18 months ago and was a stakeholders' meeting, not a public meeting. We want the church to have a future but we can't do it on our own. You need to know that there are issues, and we need to raise awareness of the issues which, if unaddressed, will have consequences.

Q This is a complex situation. I see lots of difficult choices, some of which are black and white and some greyscale. We can decide to keep the church or not. But who is it going to serve? How have other communities responded to those difficult dynamic tensions (pews, historic integrity).

A (SB) We are helped in that church buildings have the benefit of ecclesiastical exemption (*from planning laws, though there are safeguards in place*): any alteration will be a long process. Church buildings and the communities they serve develop and there is a change in culture. What's the next step? What do we need it to do? The primary use for the building is for worship but it can be used for other things; it could be subdivided into usable spaces.

Comment: If people wanted to keep the pews we could have a mezzanine.

Response: creative ideas are always welcome!

Q What assets are owned by the church and how can we use them: what other assets does the church have which it could use to raise funds and pump prime the development?

A (LH) The main asset is the Parish rooms; they are used for an out of school club which brings in regular revenue. The building is also used for church meetings and meetings of other external groups. The only other building is the Hearse House: it has no lighting or heating (except a small fireplace). Selling the Parish Rooms would technically be possible, but access is then difficult.

Comment: The church's principle asset is the congregation. Previously, 180 people were committed to the Lang Kirk 21 Project. Currently, the average Sunday attendance is 26.

Response: (JB) This point was made in the letter circulated throughout the parish, noting also that the average age of the congregation is going up. A large proportion of the congregation is committed to keeping the building going, but we can't do it on our own.

Q Is the church eligible for grants like those from the Heritage Lottery Fund?

A (SB) Yes. Up till 18 months ago, there were Listed Places of Worship grants but they have now ceased and we need to apply for grants along with everyone else. We have already applied twice but have been unsuccessful.

A (CW) Funding is available; it is a tremendous lot of work, and we were unsuccessful because we couldn't show community support for what we are trying to do. Things like the Slate Appeal are the absolute lifeblood for what we are doing. £20 of slate sponsorship may release £2000 because it demonstrates a commitment to the church. More than £800 in slate sponsorship has come in since the letters went out (not including a substantial amount of Gift Aid to be reclaimed). That kind of information is the key which may well unlock quite a big safe.

Comment Until you get rid of the pews there's not much you can do with the space. Christ Church has chairs and underfloor heating!

Response (JB) Agreed, but there are things we can do without taking out the pews.

Questions and comments from 31st October 2019

Q What response has there been so far from the letters?

A (JB) People have come here tonight and came on Tuesday; there are also responses by means of the survey, email and letters. All of these will be analysed at the end of the exercise. In addition, the financial response to the "Sponsor a Slate" Appeal has been encouraging.

Q What will happen to the Slate Sponsorship money in the event of the church closing?

A (JB) A very careful record is being kept of all donations so that if necessary they can be returned.

A (SB) If the church does close as a place of Christian worship, there will undoubtedly still be financial expenditure necessary to keep it from falling into disrepair and it may be that (with permission) those donations could still be used.

Q We already have a community hall in the village; are we putting a nail in the coffin of the Institute? Is it ethical to do something which could shut the Institute?

A (JB) This is a question we have considered. Potentially the spaces might serve different constituencies.

Q 9 or 10 years ago there was a similar initiative which hit bumps in the road and failed. Have the original concerns been looked at and resolved?

A (JB) The situation is now different. We have an existential threat which wasn't there before, in that the roof must be repaired. No change is now not an option, though what the nature of that change might look like we don't know. Details like the future of the pews for example is not an issue for tonight: we are exploring the principle of whether we can keep the building secure for the future.

Q You have indicated a shopping list, but what might it cost and where might the finance come from?

A (SB) Previous work indicated a cost in the region of £400k for repairing the roof. The Heritage Lottery Fund is probably the main grant funder but to access that, we need to prove an impact on the community. We could capitalise on the 700th Anniversary to raise £700k. What is needed is the right scheme with the right community input!

Q What is the cost of fixing things compared with the cost of closing the church? The building will require keeping, safe even if it's not open.

A (SB) The cost to the community will still exist. "Sponsor a slate" will help fund that work but the value of this building with its heritage and history is worth far more than that. It is a massive piece of history. There is no prospect of it being taken by the Churches Conservation Trust for the next four or five years; they already have plenty of work in hand.

Comment: What we ought to do is draw a list of costed priorities and work down the list.

Response: (SB) I quite agree. My previous twenty year professional career is as a civil engineer. My experience shows that the number of people here this evening and earlier in the week encourages us to do what you suggest, early in the new year. We already have a basis of work done previously which now needs updating.

Q Why would you sell off the Parish Rooms? *(This question came as a result of a comment made in the letter from Geraldine Sands, Chair of Governors at Kildwick School, which had earlier been read to the meeting).*

A (JB) This is not a suggestion that has been given any thought at all – it was a throwaway comment made earlier on!

Q What about the Vicarage? We know it's held by a different body. If the Church of England can't put money into it, they shouldn't be asking us for money for the church. You should be fighting to gain some money from the sale of the Vicarage. It's still the Church of England.

A (AJ) We provide houses for vicars and even if the house is too big, we need to house them. Every year for the past five years, the Church of England has invested £30k into the parish to provide clergy.

Q. I second the previous questioner's perception; I come from a non-religious background. The building has been empty for two years and we understand the reasoning; but keeping it empty isn't a good financial use of the building.

A (AJ) As Charity Trustees, we have a legal responsibility to get the best value from the site. We really wish it hadn't taken as long and we are doing our best.

Comment: In terms of the history and architectural value of the building, what it delivers to the community is extremely important.

Response (JB) Agreed. It's one of the things which motivates us.

Comment: You need a more bold vision: the place has got to look different and needs everyone to get behind it before we have a chance of achieving anything.

Response: (JB) Agreed. We can't do it on our own, which is why we need your ideas and input to make this work.

Q It's clear you need to take pews out but you said we can't talk about it.

A (JB) The point is well made. If we are going to have a bold vision it may well mean the church looking very different from what it does now. Is the community ready for this? Someone said "Madness is doing the same thing time and time again and expecting a different result."

A (LH) Lang Kirk 21 was a fantastic vision, which failed because of a few people who didn't like it.

Comment If you have any doubt about potential, go and look at Christ Church, Skipton – it is warm, dry and well-used for all sorts of things.

Comment I support the previous speaker, but we have to have the vision.

Response (JB) A vital part of whole plan is to work in conjunction with Farnhill Institute and also Glusburn Institute. If we work together, serving different communities, we can build a cultural hub where each gains from the other

At the end of both meetings, Julie thanked people for coming, and for showing their concern and their care. Response forms were given out, asking for indications of support, ideas and contact details. *(It was encouraging to note that at both meetings, many people stayed to chat amongst themselves and to speak to members of the panel.)*

Appendix A: *Presentation by Revd Julie Bacon which began each session.*

Good evening and welcome to St Andrew's Church, Kildwick for the first/second of these public meetings about developing a sustainable future for this historic church building.

- Slide 2

[Introduce myself; churchwardens; the Venerable Andy Jolley; Sue Booth, Buildings for Mission officer for the diocese of Leeds]

I can't remember where I heard it, or who said it, but there's a phrase that's been lodged in my memory for a long time – and that's '**we live on the leading edge of history.**' Every day we look ahead, to the future – but behind us is always the weight of where we've come from, what has shaped and formed us and brought us to where we are now.

In a place like St Andrew's, it's impossible to forget that history, those stories of what has gone before us and put us in the place where we stand today. I was licensed here at St Andrew's Church as the interim priest-in-charge for the churches in Kildwick, Cononley and Bradley almost exactly two years ago, on 14th November 2017. I'm very aware that this isn't **my** church. This church belongs to the people of this place – past, present and future. I'm just the latest in a long line of priests who've been authorised by the Church to share with the Bishop responsible for this diocese in the pastoral care of everyone who lives, works and visits this area. My time here is like the blink of an eye, compared to length of time that there has been Christian witness in Kildwick. A church has existed here since 950 AD. That's more than 1000 years, a millennium. The oldest parts of this building date back to the early part of the 14th century, to 1320, and God willing, we will be celebrating our 700th anniversary next year. For all that time, the church has been an integral part of the life of this village and the surrounding communities. **Perhaps you might say that it was at the heart of them.**

- Slide 3

Over that length of time, the church, like the rest of the world, **has seen many changes**. This building itself is the product of many changes. The church that we see today has evolved through additions, reorderings and renovations. The last major works were carried out more than 100 years ago, between 1901 and 1903, when there was a big restoration project. Since then, although the building has been maintained and repaired and kept in as good a state of repair as possible, no major works have been carried out. And as we all know, day-to-day maintenance and repair only take you so far. Every now and then, all buildings need bigger and more significant works carrying out to keep them in good heart and fit for purpose. Perhaps the most basic requirement of all for any building is that its roof is sound. Any building that isn't watertight is likely to find itself falling pretty rapidly into disrepair.

- Slide 4

We know that we have problems with the roof of this church. In 2015, the church experienced its first major fall of plaster from the ceiling. This was investigated by specialists with experience in caring for ancient buildings, who concluded that there were significant areas where the plaster's 'grip' on the ceiling was being loosened, as a result of water finding its way through the way the roof is constructed. To mitigate the effects of further falls of plaster, the netting that you can see was put up over the main aisle.

- Slide 5

Since then we've had further numerous small falls of plaster, particularly in the North Aisle and the choir vestry. We check the ceiling regularly in an attempt to avoid a further significant plaster fall, but we know that without proper attention to the roof, we can't do anything to repair the plaster. It's hard to be precise, but based on estimates obtained two or three years ago, it is likely that the cost of repairing both roof and ceiling is likely to be in the region of £500k – half a million pounds.

- Slide 6

But the roof is not the church's only problem. You may have experienced for yourselves tonight the fact that the building is **not very accessible** for those with limited mobility, or anyone in a wheelchair, or for parents with pushchairs and buggies. For anyone with less than perfect mobility, getting in and out of St Andrew's can be difficult. Yes, we have movable ramps which help, but they don't always do the job. That's not only a problem for aging members of the congregation on Sunday. It's a problem for people coming to weddings and funerals, to the services that we hold for Kildwick Primary School, or to other special services such as those we have around Christmas. Or for anyone who just wants to visit the church – to appreciate its heritage, to enjoy its peace and quiet, or because of its associations with their personal and family history.

- Slide 7

You may also be aware from personal experience of the fact that for much of the year – from about now onwards until March or April time – this is a **very cold building**. We have a heating system, but it is quite literally Victorian – a gas-powered boiler under the floor at the back of the church. It's incredibly noisy, so can only operate when the church isn't in use. And even after leaving it running all night, on a cold winter's morning, it does no more than take the edge of the chill in here. We don't expect ancient buildings to be as warm as modern ones. But we also know that cold buildings are uninviting – and we want to offer a welcome to people to this church that's warm in every sense. There are systems which can

ensure an acceptable level of background heating even in a heritage building, and if we could create areas within the church footprint that could be heated separately, that would help enormously.

- Slide 8

Another challenge that you may have experienced for yourselves is **the lack of running water** in church. We're not connected to the mains, and so every drop of water that we use in church has to be brought over by hand from the parish rooms. We often want to offer hospitality to those who come to visit us, such as the refreshments offered at the start of this evening. All the water for drinks has to be brought over in containers. And if after you've had a drink, you need to pay a visit – well, you have to go over to the parish rooms to use the toilet facilities there. Combined with the accessibility issues, that makes a trip to the loo a major undertaking for some people.

A church that's **accessible**; that's served by **running water**, so that basic catering and toilet facilities can be offered on site; **that's warm and dry and secure**. That's the very basic vision of a church building that can continue to serve the community of which it's part. The kernel of a vision for a church that remains at the heart of that community. A church that's evolved to continue to serve that community. With those things in place, the opportunities for what this church can be and how it can be used open up in every direction.

- Slide 9

At the heart of this church, like all churches that are still living and breathing, will be the life of prayer and worship that has sustained it for the last millennium. But churches have always been used for more than just that.

- It could provide a space for other groups in the community to use. The governors of Kildwick Primary School have already expressed support for this. The school is pressed for space, and having access to under-used space in church could make possible all sorts of things that currently are not.
- There's huge scope for developing what the church has to offer in terms of its heritage. We already attract visitors, particularly places as we are on the banks of the Leeds to Liverpool canal. Whenever the church is open, it seems that someone or other wants to pop in. We'd love to make the church more available for both local people and visitors.
- There are bound to be other things that we've not already thought of. Perhaps the church might become a concert venue? Or an art gallery? What other ideas do you have for what this church could be and do?

- Slide 10

Of course, for even the basic vision to become a reality from which the bigger vision can develop, we need money. And there's no way that the current worshipping congregation can find the necessary sums from its own resources. If we're going to be able to make the church accessible and warm and provide toilet and catering facilities, we're going to have to look for funding to do so. That's where the community comes in. What we're NOT doing primarily is asking you to put your hands into your own pockets – although if you want to do so, we won't say no! One of the main purposes of this exercise – the letter, and asking for people to respond in any one of a variety of ways – is to find out how much the community values St Andrew's. Because that's what many grant-making bodies, including the biggie, the Heritage Lottery Fund, is interested in. Do people care about this place? And what evidence is there that they care? Why does it matter to them? What is its value? The vast majority of

funders aren't interested in keeping going a big expensive building so that a handful of people can go there for an hour or so on a Sunday. They ARE interested in supporting something that is of value to a local community, that is a living, breathing part of their lives, that carries their stories and serves their needs, physical, emotional AND spiritual.

At the start of this talk, I spoke about how this isn't MY church. It belongs to the people of this place – those who worship here, and those who live or work nearby. The primary calling of a vicar isn't to care for a building, but for people, in the church and in the community. If a community treasures a church building, and wants to see it continue to function, then the community needs to be involved in ensuring that that happens. The body of people that we call the church cannot do it on their own. But I know that they want to see this building continue to serve the community as it has done for centuries – to respect that weight of history in this place that has formed us all and brought us to this time and this place. We need you. Do you need us?

Appendix B: Letter from the Chair of Governors at Kildwick CE VC Primary School.

Dear Revd. Julie Bacon,

Subject: St Andrew's Church – a building for the future?

Thank you very much for sending out this informative letter. You point out that Kildwick Primary School holds services in the church every half term, which are attended by parent, grandparents and carers, alongside children and staff. We really value this opportunity to use the church for collective worship and receive positive feedback about these services.

As a Church of England school, the links with St Andrew's are very important to us and we would like to use the church building more than we currently do. This desire is partly influenced by the fact that the school site is relatively small and sometimes feels a little cramped. We are always over-subscribed and therefore turn down admission applications. So, in addition to our delight in the collective worship in St Andrew's, we would welcome the opportunity to make more use of the church building and grounds for other purposes in the future. This would not be with an aim of massively increasing the intake of pupils to the school, but simply to have more space to do some of the things that we currently do, or wish to do, with the numbers of children we currently accommodate.

Ideas would include:

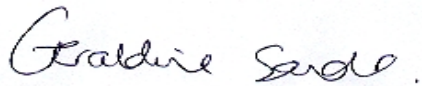
- Extra outdoor activity space using the church grounds close to the school. One of our priorities is the health and wellbeing of our children and safe outdoor space is critical to this.
- Potential space for a nursery facility which many parents would want us to provide.
- More regular use of the church for school-led collective worship
- Potential space for future before and after school club facilities, especially if the Parish Rooms are sold off.
- Space for governors' meetings
- Space for extra curricular activities and 'after school' clubs

The above suggestions may come as a surprise. They are 'blue sky thinking' and delivery would require all the deficiencies listed in your letter to be tackled; i.e. lack of running water, poor heating system, the problems with the roof. They would also require the space inside the church to be reconfigured and we appreciate that some people may not wish this to happen. We want to stress that we have no desire to offend or upset our neighbours. Likewise, increased use of the church grounds may necessitate the moving of some historic gravestones which could be both costly and controversial.

Finally, I would like to point out that we wish to work in partnership with our local neighbours, and not to try to progress anything that would cause offence. We are happy to nominate individuals to be involved in writing bids for funding, should our ideas concur with those of others.

We offer our prayers and best wishes for the meetings that are taking place in half term and assure you of our full support for any work that takes place to secure the future of St Andrew's Church which is pivotal to our school, its ethos and values.

With warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Geraldine Sands".

Geraldine Sands

Chair of Governors

Kildwick CE VC Primary School