

St Peter's Wolvercote Development Project

Project Outline 12 February 2010

St Peter's Church in Wolvercote is an Anglican Church set in a socially mixed community on the edge of Oxford. We are committed to improving our buildings in the service of our local community.

Overview

Our aim is to extend and alter our small church hall (called the 'Church Room') for the benefit of local community groups (especially the pre-school groups), to link it to the Church and to create a flexible space for community use in the north aisle of the Church. The extension to the Church Room will double its size and provide an extra meeting room and a new kitchen. We want to see a thriving, buzzing set of buildings in regular use by our community.

Our key partners in this project are the pre-school groups who currently use the Church Room. They need more space, more sessions and purpose-built facilities. Both the Playgroup and the Parent and Toddler Group who use the Church Room offer affordable pre-school provision to the local community, including families from the St Peter's Road Estate opposite the Church (one of the pockets of deprivation within the parish). Both groups have waiting lists, which will only increase if plans to build 200 new homes in Wolvercote go ahead. Our project will also benefit other current and potential user-groups of the Church Room.

Local planning permission and Faculty (Church) permissions have been secured. Quantity Surveyor costings for the work to extend and alter the Church Room are £456,000 for the first two phases of the project. An appeal to our congregation and local community was launched in March 2009, and by February 2010, we had received pledges and grants of £325,000. Fundraising events are being organised and we are applying to a number of grant-making bodies. Our hope is to begin Phase I of the project (see the costings section below) in July 2010, ideally in time to enable the Playgroup to offer more places and sessions from early 2011 onwards.

Our current hire charges are deliberately modest as a service to the community, and that will continue to be the case. Having two rooms for hire will generate sufficient income to cover their running costs. Our appeal is therefore for the capital cost of the project alone.

The need

The following needs were identified through a wide-ranging Parish Audit conducted by St Peter's Church in 2006-7, which included a community questionnaire and interviews with 23 community groups in Wolvercote.

St Peter's Playgroup and St Peter's Parent and Toddler Group (both originally set up by the Church, but now independently run) use the Church Room on weekday mornings (Playgroup 4 times, Monday to Thursday, Parent and Toddler Group once on Fridays). It is ideally situated for them opposite Wolvercote Primary School, but the facilities it offers are outdated and too small. There is no children's toilet, baby changing facilities or provision for people with disabilities. The toilets, dating from the 1950s, badly need updating. Inside play space is cramped and there is no dedicated wet play area. The only outside play area is amongst the gravestones in the churchyard. Storage is very limited.

Both groups have waiting lists: the Playgroup can currently offer 19 places, and have 20 children on the waiting list; the Parent and Toddler Group have 22 families (29 children) on their register and 16 families

on their waiting list. If and when the proposed development of 200 homes on the former Oxford University Press Paper Mill in Wolvercote goes ahead, these waiting lists are likely to increase.

From September 2010, the amount of free learning which pre-school age children are entitled to, increases to 15 hours per week during term-time (from 12.5 hours). To meet the extra demand this will create, the Playgroup needs to increase the number of sessions they offer from four to five. Because there is only one room available, though, neither the Parent and Toddler Group nor Playgroup can offer more morning sessions, which the parents would prefer. The extra room in the proposed extension would enable both groups to operate at the same time, offering more sessions and thus reducing their waiting lists. It would also enable new pre-school initiatives. Since April 2009, the North Oxford Children's Centre (based a mile away in Cutteslowe School) has had a part-time Children's Outreach Worker for Wolvercote, supporting families in this area. They would like to help initiate further pre-school groups in an improved Church Room, including more drop-in baby and toddler groups or a baby massage group. They would also support the establishment of parenting classes. *Community consultation through the Parish Audit and subsequent conversations with pre-school groups, has shown that the need and the demand for greater pre-school provision are there if the physical facilities are put in place, and that the Church Room is the ideal location to do this.*

Other Church Room user groups include Church groups for children, young people and elderly people, a drama group, a yoga group, Buddhist meditation group, Wildlife Watch group, community meetings, children's parties, refreshments after weddings and funerals. It is a well-used community building. All these groups would benefit from an improvement of the facilities, and better facilities will attract more groups. Our Parish Audit discovered a widespread perception that opportunities for elderly people to meet and socialise were lacking in Wolvercote. Apart from two church fellowship groups (which attract mainly those who are retired), there is only one regular group for elderly people - a popular lunch club. The audit suggested that further groups for elderly people would be welcomed. It also found support for a coffee café as a local meeting place for all ages, perhaps a couple of mornings each week.

The project

The Church Room is a separate building standing behind St Peter's Church, owned by St Peter's. It is Grade II listed and was built in 1830 as a school room. A kitchen and toilets were added at the back in the 1950s. Between the Church Room and the Church are gravestones.

Our intention is to move the gravestones to elsewhere in the churchyard, alter the existing Church Room and build a new extension at right angles to it, containing a second meeting room and a kitchen (see the attached plans). This will give us two medium size meeting rooms, suitable for the pre-school groups and other community meetings. Two rooms will enable different groups to meet at the same time, each with access to kitchen and toilet facilities.

The existing Church Room and the new extension will be connected to the Church with a glass link, entering the Church at the back of the north aisle. Inside the Church, the main aisle will remain traditional, retaining the pews. In the north aisle, the pews will be replaced by stackable chairs, in order to create a further flexible space: seating for services on Sundays, but available for community use midweek for exhibitions, craft sales, coffee mornings, and meetings. A small office by the link will provide the base for a part-time administrator. The glass link will enable the buildings to be used together on occasions.

The gravestones between the Church and the Church Room are being moved at an early stage in connection with the enabling and access works. This will also allow us to create an attractive cloister courtyard for Playgroup use. It will also become the venue for summer community events. The new extension and the glass link will both have sliding walls, so that the meeting room in the extension can flow into the link and from there into the courtyard. The new and adapted buildings will incorporate a number of environmentally friendly and energy efficient measures. They will comply with current regulations regarding access and toilets for disabled people. There will be a children's toilet for Playgroup use, and a significant increase in storage.

Objectives and desired outcomes

The following are our objectives and desired outcomes:

- to create a purpose built facility for Playgroup use, which can provide a safe and stimulating environment for pre-school children to learn, explore and thrive, but which will also be a high quality facility for community groups serving people of all ages
- to give the Playgroup more space, enabling them to offer more places and to run five morning sessions each week in term-time
- to create a second meeting room available for Parent and Toddler Groups to use at the same time as Playgroup is running in the other room
- to enable both Playgroup and Parent & Toddler Group to increase their capacity and so reduce or eliminate their waiting lists
- to offer high quality facilities for the benefit of existing and new users
- to encourage new groups for elderly people in order to provide support and lessen isolation
- to link the Church Room to the Church so that the Church becomes open and used on a regular basis by the community during the week
- to create a community hub where people of all ages can find social support, a sense of belonging and opportunities to make friends over a cup of coffee
- to employ a part-time administrator to promote and oversee the use of the buildings
- in the first year to find 5 new community group users and 2 new commercial group users. Thereafter to build up usage to a point where both rooms are being used by a variety of community groups for 14 out of 21 sessions (mornings, afternoons and evenings) each week during term-time
- to create facilities suitable for people with disabilities and parents with buggies
- to make the buildings environmentally friendly and energy efficient by installing a condenser boiler, high quality insulation and a recycling area.

Progress to date

St Peter's Church has been committed to supporting affordable pre-school work for decades. The Church began the Playgroup in the 1950s and the Parent and Toddler Group in the early 1980s. This project is the next expression of that continuing commitment.

We took care to assess the local community's needs and wishes through our Parish Audit in 2006-7 (an electronic copy of the final report is available on request). In the light of the findings of the audit, a Buildings Committee was formed in July 2007. Together with our architect, Adrian James, this committee shaped the project in consultation with the Diocesan Advisory Committee and Oxford City Council Conservation Officers. Planning permission was granted in November 2008 (Oxford City Council Refs: 08/02063/FUL and 08/02064/LBD). The Church Faculty was granted in January 2010. A fundraising campaign was launched in March 2009.

Costings

Quantity Surveyor estimates indicate that the cost of the proposed project will be as follows:

Phase 1: archaeological survey, moving gravestones, altering the existing Church Room	£132,000
Phase 2: building the new extension	£324,000
Phase 3: the internal changes to the Church	£220,000
Phase 4: building the glass link	£110,000

These figures reflect some special requirements arising from the nature of the site (listed building, location in the Wolvercote with Godstow conservation area, established yew trees, no-dig foundations) which necessitate the use of more costly materials and specialised building techniques.

St Peter's Church will raise the money for Phase 3. Our public appeal is for help with the cost of raising the £456,000 for Phases 1 and 2. Already St Peter's has raised £280,000 towards this. We have also planned a programme of large and small fundraising events, and both the Church and the Playgroup are applying to grant-making trusts for funding.

Future sustainability

We have estimated our running costs as follows, by roughly doubling the running costs of the existing Church Room and adding in provision for a part-time administrator, telephone and stationery.

Projected expenditure (First year of operation)	£
Gas, electricity, water	1400
Cleaning	1000
Insurance	1000
Telephone and broadband	300
Stationery, postage etc	200
Regular maintenance and sundries	600
Saving for future major repairs	1000
Administrator/caretaker*	<u>5200</u>
Total	10700

*Administrator/caretaker: 10 hours per week @ £10 per hour for 52 weeks. No Employers' National Insurance is due on this (the earnings threshold in 2009-10 is £110 per week).

Projected income (First year of operation)

Hourly rates for room hire will be £10 per hour for private parties and commercial ventures, and £5 per hour for community groups.

Projected income from current user groups

Playgroup 5 sessions x 3 hours x £5 x 38 weeks	2850
Parent and toddler group 1 session x 3 hours x £5 x 38 weeks	570
Yoga group 1 session x 3 hours x £5 x 40 weeks	600
Drama group 1 session x 3 hours x £5 x 46 weeks	690
Parties (based on 15 in 2008): projected 20 each year x 4 hours x £10	800
Meetings (based on 10 in 2008): projected 15 each year x 2 hours x £10	<u>300</u>
Total	5810

Projected income from new user groups:

Part of the role of the administrator would be to market the new facilities to attract new regular users. In the first year our aim would be to find a minimum of:

5 new community groups @ £15 per week x 40 weeks	3000
2 new commercial groups @ £30 per week over 40 weeks	<u>2400</u>
Total	5400

We believe this is a modest and achievable aim, particularly given the expression of interest cited earlier from the North Oxford Children's Centre and local support for a coffee café. But if there were to be a shortfall, that would be covered by St Peter's Church. Longer term, our aim would be to have both rooms in use by a variety of community groups for 2 out of every 3 sessions.

Summary	Total projected income (Year 1)	11210
	Total projected expenditure (Year 1)	10700