

Future of the Brick Church



Proposed Process 2023

Overview

All Saints vacated its brick church building in June 2018 after structural engineers assessed the building at 15% of the Building Code's earthquake strength requirements. Wellington City Council has since classified the building as earthquake-prone. Synod has recently voted to reduce the 67% earthquake strength code compliance for its church buildings down to match the Council's requirement of 34%.

The Parish has to decide how best to tackle this challenge, with a shared understanding of God's call to us and how we respond. The Parish AGM in November 2022 asked Parish Council to submit a plan by the next AGM – this proposed process forms that plan.

Parish Council seeks to start a process of consultation with the Parish to help determine what action we might agree on for the building. We want to look at a wide range of possible responses. Consulting all Parish members is an essential part of deciding on options for our buildings/facilities. We'll need to work through many complex issues and recognise diverse views about the Parish's activities, the role and significance of the current buildings, and potential scenarios for future buildings and facilities.

Parish Council has therefore decided to invite an external facilitator (to be confirmed) to facilitate one or more consultation meetings. They will make sure we can be thorough, open-minded and creative as we explore the Parish's future needs and formulate possible responses.

We have developed this proposal from looking at other parishes' processes and in a meeting between the Co-Vicars and the facilitator. Parish Council has now approved it to submit to the AGM.

The Aim

1. To run a process of consultation that gives everyone an opportunity to shape and inform the Parish's plan for its buildings and facilities.
2. To ensure that people in the wider parish community have trust and confidence in the process leading to decisions on building/facilities solutions.
3. To enable the voice of the parish community to be heard as input, and begin to build support for future solutions, including funding contributions.
4. To progress the consultation and development of options in a way that allows thorough consideration, and that is timely but not hasty.
5. To provide Parish Council with comprehensive, high-quality information and concepts, so they can make a future-focused, soundly based decision on which concepts to shortlist.
6. To provide a solution that can be developed to present to a Special General Meeting for approval.

Scope

The church is a sacred building, but that consecrated space can no longer be used for its designed purpose. So the project needs to address some key questions and principles:

- Maintaining historic buildings and building new ones in the 21st century is expensive, so we must ask ourselves: "Does All Saints need any buildings?" and "If so, what do the buildings need to provide?"
- The solution should ensure that All Saints' facilities remain fit for future purposes, and do not become white elephants that sap resources.

- The project should aim for the best use of funds.
- Assets – including buildings – exist to support our Mission, Vision and Values. These are not defined by the physical assets we hold.
- The broad approach should be to identify activities (current and aspirational), identify their requirements, identify the risks associated with activities, their priorities and dependencies, and use this understanding to specify the detailed requirements for buildings/facilities.

How will the process work?

The external facilitator will focus on the consultation process. Parish Council will make any necessary smaller decisions along the way.

The Plan will proceed in phases but may overlap at points along the way. Parish Council will review the high-level building/facilities solutions concepts. Following that, Parish Council will progress the chosen concept to detailed design and quotes.

Any formal decision on the future of the building will be determined by an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the Parish, and decided by those on the Electoral Roll.

The Parish needs a clear roadmap for the steps and decision points to be worked through. Knowing what will happen gives people confidence that issues will be explored thoroughly, that there is not a predetermined outcome, and that not every question needs to be explored in the first meeting.

Consultation is to include the worshipping parish community.

Suggested approach to consultation

The suggestions for consultation elements are flexible – this is the general approach.

- Interested people are encouraged to understand the challenge and think beyond short- to medium-term interests. We all need to consider wider needs rather than personal preferences.
- By working to understand needs, specifying requirements, and broadly defining options, the consultation process allows people to respectfully voice options that are challenging or less popular.
- Solutions emerge from considered conversation about what people value and believe, alongside what can be described more factually or quantitatively.
- All perspectives (emotional, spiritual, and analytical) are honoured, and all values are given respect.
- The process builds confidence that the solution will be a fair and sound one, even though it is unlikely that everyone's personal preferences can be fully accommodated.
- The Parish avoids leaping to solutions that meet today's needs, but that in 15 to 20 years may be less desirable for the health and vitality of the parish and its place in the Hataitai-Kilbirnie community.

Consultation Process

Parish-wide prayer

- Ask the Parish to commit to praying about the future of All Saints, this process, and the church buildings.
- Run a prayer vigil before the first workshop with a focus on the future at All Saints and therefore what buildings we need.
- Produce a prayer resource for people to use at home while we are going through this process.

First consultation workshop: Dreaming Ideas

Outcomes:

- Examine Parish activities in detail and consider future activities.
- Describe the buildings, facilities and other requirements that result from the priority activities.
- Brainstorm criteria to be considered in solutions.

Parish Council work: Developing Ideas

Outcomes:

- Develop initial solutions concepts for the next meeting.
- Consolidate criteria for assessing options.

Second consultation workshop: Developing Solutions

Outcomes:

Develop and explore solutions concepts further, leading to a long 'short' list. We'll need to allow time to explore creative ideas, rather than reject them outright. We may need to work in small groups, congregations or whole parish during this time. The Parish Council and outside facilitator will decide on the appropriate action for these results:

- To get the best engagement from everyone.
- To be working and engaging creatively with the process.

Parish Council work: Report and survey on solution concepts

Outcomes:

1. Report on information, consultation and description of options (including long list) and criteria.
2. Supply report to the Parish for consideration.
3. Develop a survey on solution concepts for Parish to rank from best option (in their opinion) to least.

Survey the Parish

Outcome:

1. To find the best and least favourable options among Parishioners.
2. To understand the positions people are taking and their reasons.

Third consultation discussion: Finalise options

Outcome:

1. Review and feedback based on survey results.
2. Provide full ranking to Parish Council for further exploration of costs.
3. Present options to an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting for decision as soon as practical.

Timing

We intend to complete this process in 2024.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Andrew Spence