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*making God visible*

*‘Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain’ (Psalm 127:1)*

**Annexe Update No.1 - 2 December 2018**

We are delighted that planning permission has been granted for our Annexe and are thankful to the Property Group for working with our architects to get us to this stage.

It is now estimated that the total cost will be in excess of £550,000 and we have begun to pay professional and other fees: £7,000 to date with another bill of £20,000 now due to the architects. So far funds have been generated locally to meet these costs and we are very grateful for the £30,000 we have received so far from grants, personal donations, fundraising events and Charities Plant Stall. But there is still a long way to go.

We have pledges of substantial sums from the Methodist Circuit, County Council and from our own members and of course it is intended to use the proceeds of sale from the Baptist Chapel. Again we are most grateful. Beyond this our Fundraising team is pursuing several applications to bodies that will make grants of between £5,000 and £50,000, but none of this is guaranteed.

Unfortunately we have just heard that our bid to Aviva was unsuccessful, but huge thanks to everyone who took the time to vote and also encouraged friends & family to vote for our project – this has certainly raised the profile locally.

It is intended that the church will be updated regularly as we move forward but even if we are successful with all potential sources it is anticipated that a shortfall will remain. For this reason we would ask that if any personal annexe donations are intended then you will please inform Rob as soon as you can.

The Property Group is meeting with the architect this week in order to discuss a possible timeframe for construction together with the impact upon the use of our building during this period.

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**Annexe Update No.2 – January 2019**

In early December, we met with our architects to consider the changes they had needed to make to the design of the Annex in order to get the planning application approved. The local planners had not wanted people walking along Wood Street to be able to look directly down into the kitchen so the area immediately behind the windows had been incorporated into the café area.

This has reduced the size of the new kitchen though it is still bigger than our existing one and the Premises Group are considering whether to ask the architect to go back to the planners to see if they are prepared to compromise on this.

We have asked the architect to let us have a timescale for the building work and they have advised that once work is underway, we will be restricted to a maximum of 60 people in our hall at any one time. However we can continue to take bookings throughout 2019.

The next steps will be to instruct the architects to start preparing detailed drawings and involve other professionals such as the Quantity Surveyor and Structural Engineer. But before we take this step and incur further costs, we need to be confident that we can raise the money needed to complete the project. In early December, we received the good news that we had been awarded £25,000 by the Garfield Weston Charity and following a meeting with the Methodist Notts and Derby District Grants Officer, we were successful in our application for a District grant of £20,000, the maximum available. We hope to hear the result of our application to another Trust in the next few days and are working on an application for a major grant from the Methodist Church Trustees in Manchester. We have been advised by our District Grants Officer to ask for a substantial grant and even if we are only awarded a lesser sum, it could make a big contribution to the total costs of the Annex.

Further local fundraising events are planned over the coming months and we continue to be grateful for the contributions we have received so far from grants, personal donations, past fundraising events and Charities Plant Stall. Again, if you have an idea for a fundraising event or project, please let us know. The fund-raising group is Rob, Sue, Barbara and David.

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**Annexe Update No.3 – May 2019**

When considering our original plans for the new Annex, the District Council planners were concerned about people walking along Wood Street being able to be able to look directly down into the new kitchen. As a result, the area immediately behind the kitchen window was incorporated into the café area. This reduced the size of the new kitchen and the Premises Group agreed to ask the architect to go back to the planners to see if they were prepared to compromise on this. They have now responded saying they still concerned but accept they cannot control how we organise the interior of our new building and would be extremely unlikely to take any action to force us to revert to the original plan. We have decided therefore to revert to the original layout which gives us maximum space in the new kitchen.

You will have all had an opportunity to see the model of the new development which arrived just before the Prayer and Gift day on 17th March.

This has proved very useful in helping us to understand how the new space will be used and to show visitors what we plan to build.

On the fundraising front, we have been awarded a £50,000 grant from the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes Discretionary Fund and are currently awaiting a decision on an application for a much larger grant (£166,000) from the Methodist Connexional Fund for Property. Back in March we were visited by one of the assessors and were able to show him round the present building, examine the model and talk through outstanding issues. It will be early June before we get a decision on this application and have been warned not to be too optimistic as ‘funds are tight this year’. As a result, we have started to talk to the National Lottery to see if they can assist us. We continue to be amazed by the generosity of members and friends - our recent Prayer and Gift Day raised £14,644, tax recovered through Gift Aid over the last year amounted to £8498 and fundraising and a further donation have added £6269. The decision of the special Baptist Members’ meeting on 17 March to seek to apply as much as necessary of the sale proceeds of 17 Yeoman Street, Bonsall to the Annexe fundprovides us with a safety net and we are currently in contact withEast Midlands Baptist Trust Company to seek their agreement to this at their next meeting in June.

The current estimated cost of the Annex of £675,185 is based on a start on site in the second quarter of next year – to achieve this we need to instruct our architects to start preparing detailed drawings in early July and at this point we need to be confident that we can raise the necessary finance. The Trustees meeting taking place on 4th July 2019 provides the opportunity to do this.

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