



Making History Project Group Report for APCM 2019

We have much to be thankful for over the past year:

- Final detailed design drawings were completed by our architects;
- Faculty for Phase 1 of our project was granted by the Chancellor;
- Tenders were submitted, a preferred contractor identified;
- Wates grant received to enable us to tell our heritage story better
- Fundraising continued with further generous gifts from the congregation and community, events and grant applications.

However, the Project Team recognises that the pace of progress has, at times, been frustrating for some within the congregation, who have been living with the New Future vision for nearly 10 years. Please take comfort in the fact that it is not uncommon for large reordering projects, like ours, to take several years to complete. Continue to support and pray for our dedicated and enthusiastic Making History project team, who have been working tirelessly to bring this project to fruition.

With the tender prices coming in 25% higher than the Quantity Surveyor's original estimates, we have had to revise the scope of Phase 1a to include stone floor, underfloor heating with conduits for audio-visual, step-free access and welcoming entrance (new lighting and sound equipment will be added as funds allow. Toilets and kitchen will be a later phase). The priority now is to confirm the reduced project scope with our chosen contractor at a price within our available budget, while at the same time continuing with our programme of fundraising. All being equal, we believe we are within months of starting building works on the reduced scope Phase 1a.

Physical Progress:

As reported last year, the ground penetrating radar indicated that there were anomalies in seven parts of the church floor. Exploratory works were approved under licence and test pits dug in these areas. After further consideration by the archaeologist present at the digs, it was suggested that the voids under the floor were most likely to be the result of burials or tombs which had collapsed.

As some unarticulated human remains were found in the test pits, we decided to change the design of the underfloor heating system to one which would require less depth of excavation to implement, and therefore less chance of disturbing any human remains, thereby reducing the risk of using contingency funds.

The archaeologists agreed that we should remove the covering concrete in both the North and South transepts to reveal the underlying structures. This work was carried out following the dismantling and storage of the Parker and Allen organs.

The structures revealed were more or less as expected. In the North Transept there are 18th/19th Century dome topped brick vaults of the Spicer and Gore families – residents of the Mansion House. The unprotected coffin of Catherine Wade was also discovered in a very delicate condition. In the South Transept a very large domed top vault of the Bolton family of Thorncroft Manor, was discovered with seven caskets within.

Growing disciples of Jesus Christ



LEATHERHEAD PARISH CHURCH

The Archaeologists have agreed a procedure for lowering the height of the vaults in the North Transept, but it has been decided that step-free access to the South Transept (Remembrance Chapel) will be via a slight incline, rather than disturbing the vault structure.

Test pits were also dug outside the church in the area of the proposed toilet block and as expected there is a tomb under the surface which will be subject to archaeological removal at the point we come to build the toilets.

At the time of tender for the complete project all the designs were completed. This will allow other parts of the project to be implemented when funds become available.

Fundraising:

In 2018 we raised a further £120,000. £103,000 is for our capital project and £17,000 for heritage interpretation. Additional funds have been pledged over and above this sum.

Donations

Following a renewed appeal for funds at the end of 2018, three generous donations from members of the congregation were received, and a local business has committed to pay for the renovation of the Remembrance Chapel. We are also grateful to those people, who continue to make a monthly contribution over and above their regular church giving.

Events

Throughout the year many people have given up their time to help raise funds for the project. These have included: Leatherhead Residents' Association Race Night; The Friends Quiz; Strawberries & Pimm's on a Summer Evening; Open Garden event; An Evening with Hedley Kay & Friends; The Old Time Music Hall; as well as congregation members running a knitting circle and arranging lunches at home. Additionally, everyone remembers the publicity and community involvement inspired by the sponsored abseil down our church tower.

Opportunities to tell people about our project have included Ashstead Village Day, River Mole Discovery Day and monthly outings with the charity cart in Leatherhead Swan Centre. You may have seen that we are the Swan Centre's charity for 2019. An exhibit is in a display window opposite Sainsburys.

Grant Applications

Due to grant application criteria it took some time before we qualified to apply for some grants. An application to Garfield Weston for its 60th Anniversary Fund was unsuccessful. However, while The Wates Family Enterprise Trust were unable to contribute to the building fund, they generously donated money toward our heritage interpretation, which is now underway.

We currently have three further grant applications under consideration.

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