

June 2021 – Update for parishioners about the building project

Progress is being made, including considerations around selling the land for development, but it is likely we will need to move forward in phases.

- On 18th May we had a pre-Application meeting with Havering Council, which was positive; some amendments to our plans are needed, but **it looks like a full planning application would progress reasonably smoothly.**
- We have had **excellent support from the Diocesan property team.**
- The pandemic has affected many things, and **it is essential for us to establish a current precise land value.** We are keeping as many options open as possible, but as things stand, the best way for us to maximise the value of the land is to sell it outright. Supported by the Diocese we are therefore going to begin a **full process for the sale of the land**, to be sure of the amount of funds available for the building project. The process is designed with professional support at each step, to give us flexibility in terms of how we consider bids for the land. We will keep you updated about this.
- If the land value is insufficient to complete the building project in one go, we will proceed in phases.

What happens now?

- **Before the pandemic, in February 2020, we carefully invested £7,000 to make the parish centre usable on a temporary basis;** a partition to a storage area, hot water in the kitchen and toilets, etc. Because of this essential expenditure (and subject to Covid restrictions) the **parish centre can be used by groups throughout the rest of 2021, for as long as needed.**
- **If the bids we receive are acceptable, the process of selling the land will hopefully be concluded in the late autumn, though it may take longer. When we know the funds available, we will be able to adjust plans and timings accordingly, bringing proposals to the whole parish.**
- **In the meantime, we will make a full planning application to the Council.** This will cover the fullest works that we could do, so that we will have planning permission which remains valid even if we complete the build in phases.
- **The natural starting point for a phased build would be the full refurbishment of the parish centre (minus the mezzanine), demolition of the hall and resurfacing of the car park, and interior redecoration of the church.** Extending the church and linking to the parish centre, etc., would come later, depending on funds.

You can see that a huge amount of work is going on “behind the scenes.” We will update whenever anything changes, or when we have a firm land sale, etc. Please feel very welcome to email Fr Dominic with any questions. Please do keep it all in prayer.