

1 December 2017

St Alban's Church Eastbourne
Review of Blue Skies Day
10am – 2pm 19 November 2016

Communications Team:

Joy Baird, Ann Packer, Julia Stuart, Shelley Seay

Prior promotion:

- Half page advertisement and feature in October's Eastbourne Herald. The timing of the November issue was not practical for advertising.
- Posters in public notice boards, library and businesses around the village and in businesses in Days Bay.
- Bus stops and harbour ferry shelter - until they were removed.
- Word of mouth.

Attendance:

- Initial response 10 – 12 up to 30 people but these were largely parishioners.
- Steady flow of up to ten new people at any time until about 12.30 when there were only about 3 – 5 respondents at the most.
- In sum – probably 80-100 respondents – 50/50 community and parishioners

Responses:

- **Stars (community and parish) and dots (parish only) to statements:**

Poster	Statement	19/11	20/11	Sum
1 Church	I like the way St Alban's looks outside & would not want it changed	48	9	57
	I like the interior and want that kept as far as possible:	23	5	28
	The inside needs modernising and made more flexible	6		6
	I like the peacefulness and beauty of the church & garden	29	5	34
	I like having a church where I can go & sit for a quiet time	14	1	15
	I don't care much how it looks but I still want an Anglican church in the Bays	7	1	8
	Pull it down and start again	3		3

Poster	Statement	9/11	20/11	Sum
1 Hall	Strengthen the existing hall & maximise its current usage	20	4	24
	Redevelop the hall as a place where people can stay overnight as part of a church or community event.	11	2	13
	Create a new hall with a variety of convenient spaces for different activities	23	3	26
	Link the church and hall for maximum usage	4	3	7

B.S.D		9/11	20/11	sum
	Develop whole site	2		2
	Parish mission statement	1		1
	Develop St Alban's as a southern Eastbourne community hub for a variety of church and community activities	7	2	9
	Make it useable as a civil defence centre with tank water, supplies and safe shelter for people made homeless by emergencies	19	3	22
	A quiet place for spiritual retreat and renewal in God's love	18	3	21
	An arts centre for sharing creativity and culture through classes, concerts, performances and gallery space	7	3	10
	A strengthened church and hall	8	1	9
	A strengthened church and new hall	17	3	20
	A rebuilt complex for both parish and community use	4	1	5

Overview of Response to stars and spots: See pics of posters attached

Many parishioners responded on the Saturday. Overall most responses favoured the retaining and strengthening of the church, valuing its historic character, spirituality and peacefulness. Responses to the hall mainly favoured building a new facility – to be used especially for civil defence purposes, as a spiritual retreat and a community hub for an extended variety of activities.

- **Post-it notes** (plus 8 with one star, 2 with one star) 41

Themes:

- Retain historical building (church) when strengthened. Historic value and place of worship. If lost, can't be brought back. Moveable seating.
- Look to the future. Attract more young people. Rebuilding may secure future. Build new complex which better suits families and children.
- Hall should be developed to better meet community needs. Don't replicate other facilities.
- Talk to the regular worshippers. Don't overlook key purpose as a place of worship.
- St Albans garden is loved for its beauty and peacefulness`

- **To be kept in touch:** 17
- **Julia Stuart's books sold** 1

General Observations from 19/20 November

19/11

- Many when asked to participate responded that they thought it was only for "church goers and Christians"
- The overall demographic were older than sixty. There was a marked absence of youth. Very few young family members or 20 to 30 year-olds responded who were not already part of the congregation.
- Those who came to respond, took time to read and consider.

- The Library staff were extremely helpful and forthcoming with facilities and ideas.
- Numbers visiting and curiosity was helped by the council consultation upstairs.
- The public who responded thought it a very good idea, well executed and were pleased to be given the opportunity.
- Chance to connect with council, community facilities and some of our established community members who have broad networks. Some who offered help and wanted to be involved and even donated for the cause.

Rev'd Ellie's initial observations:

- Gave us an opportunity to talk to people in the community. I've had some good conversations. Good to connect.
- Very convenient to have the council consultation upstairs and have had a "let's get together" with Chris Bishop (National Party list MP) and Michael Lulich of the council.
- Big buzz with the library.
- Good to have greater youth involvement and thinking about doing a Survey Monkey to gather a different demographic.
- I got the sense that it increased the connection with the public and validated it for them.

Some Comments from non-parishioners:

Ann Horrill : "I've been in Bays for thirty years and the longer I am here the more I appreciate the need for this and other community facilities. The Church and Hall in particular are a tremendous community asset - especially for Civil Defence. I have been to funerals, birthday parties, dance parties, seniors' meetings and the more I go to St Alban's the more I enjoy and value the facilities as an essential part of the community. '

"Good approach"

"Couldn't care less. Not interested"

"Many people have a great investment in the church even though they may have never darkened its door. "

"I pass it every day. It is part of my life. I love hearing the bell and knowing it is there for me if I need"

"A lovely presence in our community" Alan

The Library has kindly offered to have a suggestion box attached to the St Albans "Under Threat" poster in the library for the foreseeable future.

Whats next?

- Thank you notes to library, designer, school
- Report findings to the parish

- Check up on suggestion box in the library.
- Request agreement to send a media release to Eastbourne Herald on Blue Skies 19/11 findings.

Things to think about:

These ideas are outside the scope of the present communications committee but are offered as consideration for the parish and future groups:

- Given the early stage we are at and the importance placed on the church and hall buildings from so many of the respondents, the communication team believe this Blue Skies public and congregation consultation is only a beginning. It has touched only a small sector of the community. Any further interactive event would need a greater lead time.
 - Those who are directly related to us at St Albans need to now become engaged and consulted. For example, the Pop Up and Play Group, Meditation Group, Knitwits and other groups who have regularly used the Church and/or Hall facilities and are part of St Alban's "sphere of influence".
 - The communications team are concerned to keep conversations over the future of the church and hall buildings wide and to keep the momentum going. They encourage everyone to look for further opportunities to increase awareness to support any future consultation and fund raising in the future.
 - Some organised ways of promoting awareness:
 - Through a Survey Monkey if support and contact details of targeted demographic are offered
 - focus groups
 - library displays
 - school and community activities that focus on the history or environment surrounding the church and gardens.
 - There is much support for a Civil Defence centre located in St Alban's church hall. Given the southern location and the Tsunami protection offered by the large sand hill between church and sea, this idea would benefit from further inquiry - from a geological, community and congregation point of view.
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Appendix One- Comments from Post-it Notes

Comments are recorded as written and have not been amended or grouped.

'Endorsement' refers to an additional star or spot attached to an existing statement.

There were only a few endorsements placed after Sunday worship, (some parishioners had already filled in post-its at the library), but there was much interest in what had been written the day before.

- A gathering place. Simplicity, reflects nature and remains natural. A dwelling place where the Spirit peacefully dwells.
- Obviously rectification has to be governed by cost, but if possible strengthening of the church and hall should be a priority to maintain in what is a peaceful consoling and lovely place for worship and community.
- Please retain St Alban's.
- Keep it as it is please.
- Church – Remove pews, Install moveable seating, Flexible space would facilitate more activity. (2 endorsements)
- Have you asked the regular worshippers what they think?? Their views need to hold more "weight" than the general Eastbourners who never use the church!
- First choice. Church strengthened but its good qualities kept. Hall developed further. If the church has to be radically changed or demolished, then create chapel using the materials from the church with same atmosphere, peace and calmness.
- I am neither Anglican or a church attender. However, I appreciate the church for funerals, significant occasions and quiet reflection. I have enjoyed the hall and garden for events, dance classes, birthday parties, Take a Break programme. I like that both buildings can meet many human needs – spiritual, social, commercial.(Anne Horrell)
- Keep it as it is. Keep the garden.
- I think the existing structure can be strengthened using a buttress, or if necessary a complete frame. (Sketches showing 'A' frame type structure follow) WT.
- Retain the look and atmosphere of the church, hall and gardens as they currently are: but do the necessary strengthening work to enable its safe use.
- Opportunities for more people/families to live "on site" as spiritual anchors for sacred community.
- I like the interior as it is, but I think the seating needs some re-thought. E.g. moveable seats with pockets on the backs for hymn-prayer books.
- A covered link between church and hall. This would eliminate the need to put up a fence each week for Pop in and Play. (1 endorsement).
- The church and hall need to continue to be a flexible centre point for the community and may need adaptations to continue to be so. The church and gardens are a tranquil setting + the aesthetic should not be changed too much.
- Focus on providing assets that will support multiple activities –i.e. more than just Sunday worship. These are activities that will draw new people into the parish and ultimately keep it alive. (1 endorsement).
- With so few historical buildings left in our community, it is vital we do everything to restore the church for generations to come.

- We have a sentimental attachment to the church through baptisms and marriage. It would be a great loss to bow the historic church.
- I would like to think through the process of strengthening that we would need to consider the future in terms of resources for the 100 years ahead – upgrading the electrics, IT system, heating and ventilation etc. The building is key but budgeting for other items now will be a cost saving.
- Get back to worship soon in Ngaio St in a strengthened or part rebuilt hall to start with. The church??
- Preserving the church building “as is” is a priority. The church hall is lovely but its future would depend on cost.
- The community need to be told that they need to get behind fundraising! If they wish to use the church for weddings and funerals, then they need to support strengthening work.
- An Arts Centre??? NO WAY! This is a place of worship. Yes we want a hall that can link the community in but don't lose sight of the purpose of a place of worship.
- As beautiful as the church and hall is, I think it's more important to think AHEAD for the next 50-100 years. Strengthening may keep the aesthetics, but rebuilding may secure the future. (1 endorsement)
- Fixing the church and hall may solve short term problems but there is a bigger issue looming – how to reverse the decline in parish numbers. If we don't work on that there will be no-one around soon to use the church and hall.
- Ideally I'd love the church and hall to stay but am also aware that in wanting to invite the larger community in, we may need to take a more long term view. Perhaps a purpose built retreat/community centre would make sense. (2 endorsements)
- Hall-strengthen as a priority over church to bring activities back on site ASAP.
- Spend money on the hall not the church that no-one will use in 15 years.
- I don't think a Civil Defence centre is a good idea because – it is in the tsunami zone, Muritai School already performs this function. (1 endorsement)
- Community hub (tick) Civil Defence Centre(tick) Strengthen, unstructured kindness in the community.
- We must remember there are quite a few organisations & facilities that already cater for many of the activities suggested. We must not compete or we run the risk of losing existing organisations and facilities. Should grow from us and others needs – not from a new facility.
- I would like to see ideas for a new hall that supplies all the needs of St Alban's worship, outreach and community. (1 endorsement)
- Create a community centre that the church and other groups can use.
- The process and attendance is not representative of Eastbourne generally. Under 40's are unlikely to use or fund the existing church building, except \$10 a year weddings and funerals. (1 endorsement)
- Restoration of both buildings to their former state may well serve the remaining years of existing parishioners, but the needs of the church/community in the future are more important.
- Have a worship space that attracts families and youth.
- Consider whole area of land hall/church/vicarage. Get something built for 21st century. (1 endorsement)

- Look at the whole area of land – work out how to cater for the needs of a growing congregation. (1 endorsement)
- I would like to see a new hall development that encompasses a variety of community activities. I love the sanctity of the church. But----
- I think the church has been presented with a great opportunity to divest itself of buildings that are really suitable to old fashioned styles of worship and instead look to the future build a complex that serves a wider community in a more inclusive way, especially youth and children. The church is the community not the buildings and I feel the current buildings are very limiting.
- Yeah but surely we should be community focused. Jesus came to demolish the church, the buildings follow rules. We need to be thinking what's the best for our community, getting them into the church and learning about God. Isn't that our purpose?

Additional comments added at the Sunday service on 20 November.

- Ask parish what their needs/desires are.
- Share resources with San Antonio's church.
- In New Year, how about Sunday Service at San Antonio's as do not use Sundays?
- Widen centre aisle (of church) for ease of pall bearers.