

## Q&A September 2016

*Q. Who is responsible for paying for earthquake strengthening / building redevelopment?*

A. Vestry, led by the wardens is responsible for the overall stewardship and management of parish buildings, and to ensure that all necessary maintenance and repair work is carried out. Day to day maintenance is normally funded from the annual budget of the parish. Similarly for major projects funding is raised from within the parish. In the case of most parishes, the land itself is held in the name of the Wellington Diocese, Board of Trustees.

The Hall and Vicarage are however held in the name of the Parish of Eastbourne Trust, so that body will deal directly with the hall.

*Q. How will work on the church be paid for then?*

A. This will need to be carefully worked through as more detail of the likely costs can be established. It is likely to be a combination of capital from the Parish of Eastbourne Trust, fundraising and the potential of grant applications are also being explored. A Fundraising Committee is being established by the Vestry to lead this effort. Some great ideas have already been suggested, including selling bricks salvaged from demolition work and buying/naming new bricks similar to the paving outside the Dowse.

*Q. What is the story on insurance for the church? Who holds it and what does it cover?*

A. The Church, Hall and Vicarage are all insured under the insurance policy of the Anglican Diocese of Wellington, and the premium is paid by the parish. Buildings and contents are insured for replacement value, but there is no cover for natural disaster, other than for the vicarage and vicarage contents (via the Earthquake Commission).

*Q. St Alban's church has stood on its site for over 100 years. It hasn't been damaged in any of the earthquakes we've had since then. How come the building is now so weak it can't be used?*

A. Over this time, engineers have learned a great deal more about construction styles, materials and standards which contribute towards keeping people safe in the event of an earthquake. Earthquakes in New Zealand (Christchurch) and overseas (San Francisco) have contributed to this knowledge.

In New Zealand, new buildings have to be built to meet 100% of the earthquake standard set out in the current Building Act. Buildings meeting less than 33% New Building Standard (NBS) are classified as earthquake prone and have 15 years to comply with the law, by either being strengthened or demolished. A Diocesan Synod in 2012 requires all Church Buildings in the Diocese to be brought to a minimum standard of 67%NBS by March 2024, or as per local Council requirements.

*Q. What magnitude of earthquake would it take to damage our church or hall?*

A. Unfortunately, it's not possible to answer this with a number describing the severity of the earthquake. Whether buildings are damaged and how much, depends on earthquake depth, location and direction of movement. A less severe, but shallow earthquake close to Eastbourne, would be likely to cause much more damage than a more severe earthquake further away.

*Q. There have been two recent earthquake reports done on the church and hall. How come the first report didn't indicate how serious the problem is? Why were the reports so different?*

A. The first "non-destructive" inspection identified issues from a visual inspection of the buildings. As the result of these findings, a second report was requested. This "destructive inspection" opened up walls and took x-rays of walls, foundations and buttresses. This report identified serious concerns such as lack of reinforcing in brick walls, buttresses not supporting walls or buttresses not anchored correctly into foundations.

*Q. Why can't the church foyer be used?*

A. Although this was built later, construction defects were found here too.

*Q. I understood individual people could still go into the church. Why is this not allowed to happen?*

A. The decision to close the church was made by the wardens after receiving advice from engineers, discussion with vestry, and in consultation with the Diocese. In making this decision the wardens first took advice from the professional engineers involved. Then wardens took advice from the Diocese. A number of meetings or contacts were held both with engineers and with diocesan representatives. The Diocese advised in similar situations where a church or hall had to be closed for not meeting seismic requirements, the buildings were vacated and closed completely. In the case of St Alban's the church and hall at 15% and 20% respectively, were both well under seismic requirements. The wardens, with the endorsement of vestry, made the difficult decision to completely close the church for safety reasons.

*Q. How come the church was closed without parishioners having any say in the decision?*

Our church canons provide that the churchwardens and vestry, in consultation with the Diocese, hold responsibility for decisions about church buildings. (See the above answer as to how this decision was reached)

*Q. Will the beams in the church support the roof in the event of an earthquake?*

A. No. They were never designed to do that.

*Q. What will be done to the church roof?*

A. Over several previous years, the vestry has discussed the roof and noted its deterioration. Minor repairs such as tile replacements have been carried out, but it was agreed no major work would be undertaken while seismic assessment was underway. The current roof is not the original roof, but is thought to be around 30-40 years old. As part of the major job ahead, a new roof of a more modern and lighter material would be selected.

*Q. Will it to be cheaper to 'fix' the church inside or outside?*

A. At this stage we don't know and won't until more detailed work is done. The engineers suggested outside buttresses as a solution, as in this way the attractive interior, designed by Frederick Jersey de Clere (a well-respected architect of early New Zealand churches) would not be compromised.

The parish will eventually make this decision.

*Q. Is the best solution for the hall to be demolished and rebuilt? Or could the main part be strengthened, and the ends be retained?*

A. Again we don't know and won't, until more detailed work is done. Engineers from BECA are to take a further look at this in the near future.

It is possible there could be tension between the 'most inexpensive' solution and the 'best' solution in many aspects of the work on both the church and the hall.

*Q. Why is the hall kitchen still in use, but not the lounge? And why is the parish office still in use?*

A. The ends of the hall were both constructed after the centre of the hall and use different materials. Further work is being done to ensure their use remains safe. The kitchen and lounge end is complicated by the positioning of the old stage, hence the lounge and the kitchen need to be considered separately.

*Q. How long will all this work take?*

A. We won't have an answer to this for some time. Vestry is currently putting together a "road map" to identify work required and decision points necessary.

*Q. When will the parish have a chance to share ideas about what could happen?*

A. A suggestion book is now in the hall foyer outside the parish office and comes to our Sunday services. Vestry is currently considering other ways this could happen soon, at the beginning of the process. It's recognised people have interesting ideas which they'd like a chance to share.

*Q. How will decisions be made about what is to happen?*

A. Major decision points require a Special General Meeting (with 3 Sundays' notice). In the meantime you'll probably be hearing all manner of ideas. Be assured these are all just ideas. No decisions have been made. The parish together make these decisions. Vestry's current priority is to make sure that we have the right information to help the parish make those decisions.

*Q. Church or hall? Which one will be fixed first?*

A. A major decision point. This will need to be decided by the parish. A meeting with the pros and cons of the options will be held once sufficient information can be provided to make this decision.

*Q. How will the treasures in the church and hall be looked after while the buildings are not in use?*

A. Access to the church and hall will be arranged to remove our treasures. They will be carefully stored while buildings are vacant and work is undertaken.

*Q. How can you guarantee the church and hall won't be damaged in an earthquake?*

A. There is no guarantee. The requirements of the Building Act are intended to prevent people being seriously injured or killed in the event of an earthquake which damages the building.

*Q. What will happen to the gardens between the church and hall?*

A. It is likely that we will need to relocate plants as they are likely to be damaged when work is underway. This needs to be done as soon as possible, before the summer.

*Q. How can we be kept up to date with what's happening?*

A. A number of ways.

- 'Seismic Scoop' will provide a mini update in each pew sheet.
- The pew sheet will provide other information as it's available.
- A communication tree is being finalised to provide a contact mechanism by email or phone.
- A communication team being established will provide longer written updates when important information is available.
- When the 'roadmap' is finalised, this will identify the stages when information and/or decision points will occur.