

Updating St Edward's for a post-Covid future

APCM paper 2020

Before the Covid -19 pandemic, the PCC had penciled in a date in May to hold a consultation in church to inform and take views on Phase 1 of our updating proposals. Having considered the feedback and finalized the proposals, the PCC would then have sought a Faculty to take the work forward. At the same time, they were proposing to launch an Appeal to help fund the work.

This timetable was overtaken by the Covid-19 pandemic which has fundamentally changed the way in which we currently do church. Rather than people 'coming to church', for over 6 months now the 'church has come to the people', through home delivery of services and on-line services. It now seems very likely that many of these changes will endure. Since August we have again been able to offer Holy Communion in St Edwards on a weekly basis.

On-line worship has been enriched by music of a range and quality usually beyond the resources of a regular parish church. We have also had video input which has enhanced the quality and depth of what we have been able to offer and regularly connected us with pictures of the people we have been praying for. Many of these gains we will not want to lose when we come back together.

So the enforced pause in the re-ordering agenda gives us time to look again at our proposals and priorities for updating the church building. It is also relevant that the Deanery is looking at a new strategic plan as the ways in which the church connects with people are changing. We are also in touch with those developing the Stow and the Swells Neighbourhood Plan and would want any changes we make to facilitate wider use of St Edward's for any appropriate community needs the Plan may suggest.

There are two possible ways forward at this stage which directly relate to these plans. The APCM is invited to offer views on the following proposals:

1. We actively prepare for our return to church post Covid-19 by improving connectivity, introducing the capacity to live-stream and record services and having a screen mounted out of sight behind the rood beam to be used as appropriate to support Sunday Prayer services.
2. We consult about Phase 1 of the Updating Plans both on-line and with a Church open-day, with a view to completing the work as soon as possible and, ideally, before we return to church.

Two other papers are offered for background:

- **St Edwards – A Special Building.** This introduces the most recent thinking behind the updating project and could become the basis of a fund-raising leaflet.
- **APCM Re-ordering Report 2020.** This tells the story of the project over the last ten years.