

Appendix D

Parish Survey on church buildings and halls

Full responses to Diocese of Chester PCC survey, summer 2018

From July to October 2018, PCC's were invited to take part in a Diocesan - wide survey, exploring the use, management, role and thinking about church buildings and halls. A total of 20 responses were received. The findings are summarised below.

Q1 Have you enhanced your church building or church hall over the last decade?

19 out of 20 said yes

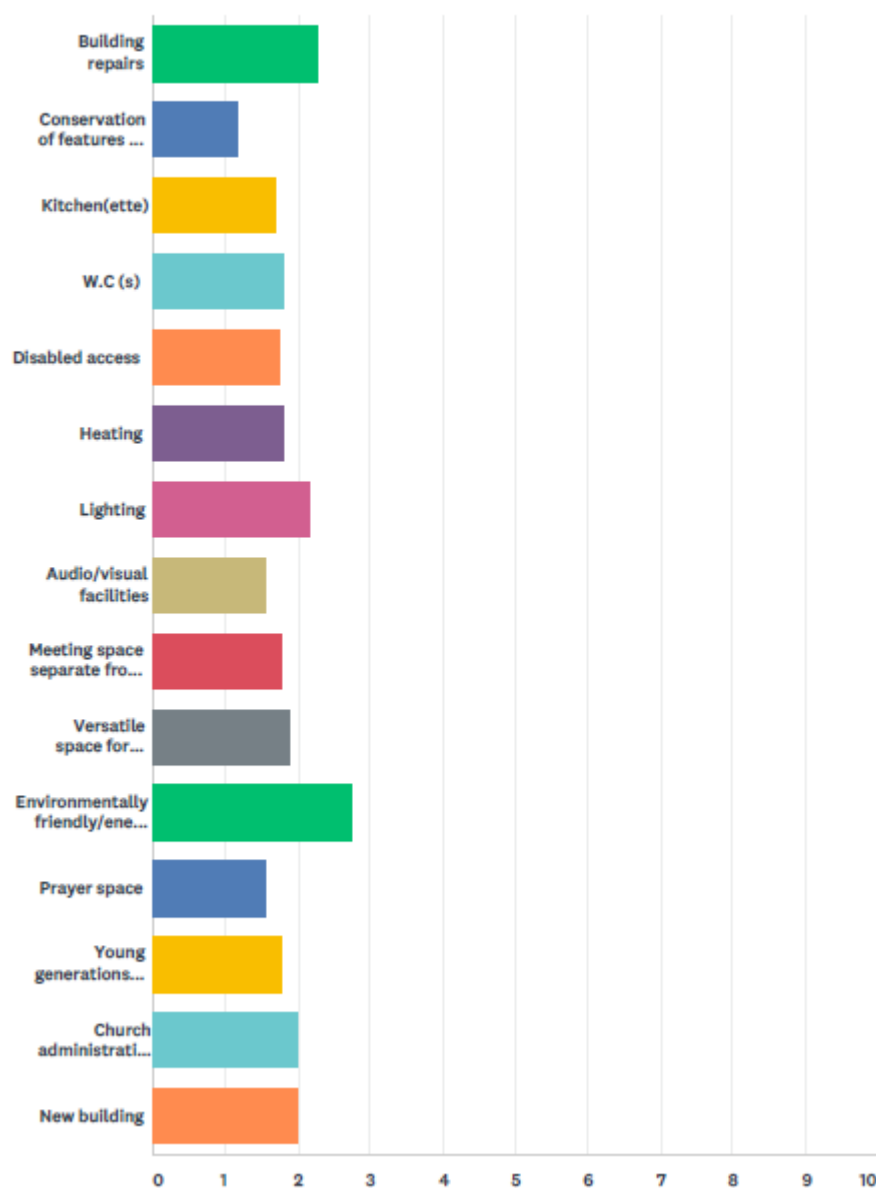
Q2 What work was done?

- *To Church building* - the most frequent answers are audio/visual (A/V) and conservation of features, with a secondary priority of heating.
- *To Church hall* - improved meeting space is the most frequent work, closely followed by administrative/storage space, kitchenette and versatility of space for mission and ministry.
- *To both* - repairs are the overwhelming priority. Secondary priorities are lighting, heating, audio/visual (A/V) and energy efficiency.

With all responses combined, it provides a fairly even picture of the breadth of needs for capital investment. Energy efficiency/environmentally friendly initiatives are the most frequent answer, followed closely with repairs, although further factors are not far behind. Please see the following survey chart for question 2.

Q2 If yes, what work was done? (Tick all that are relevant)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 2



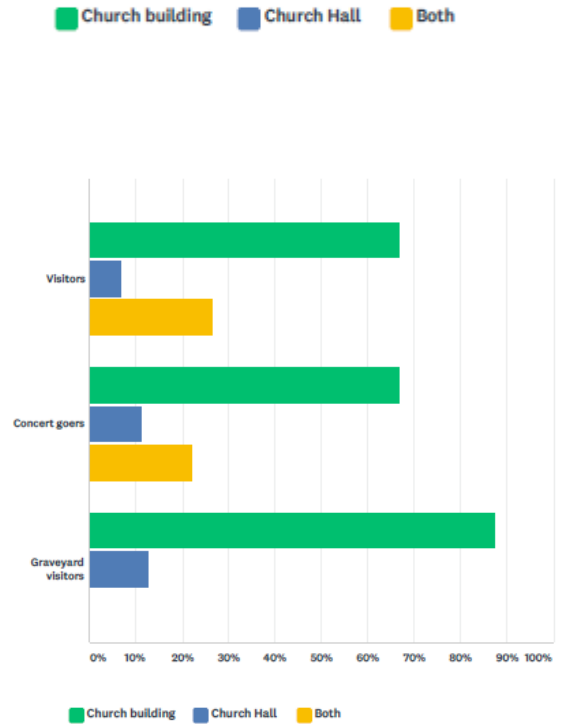
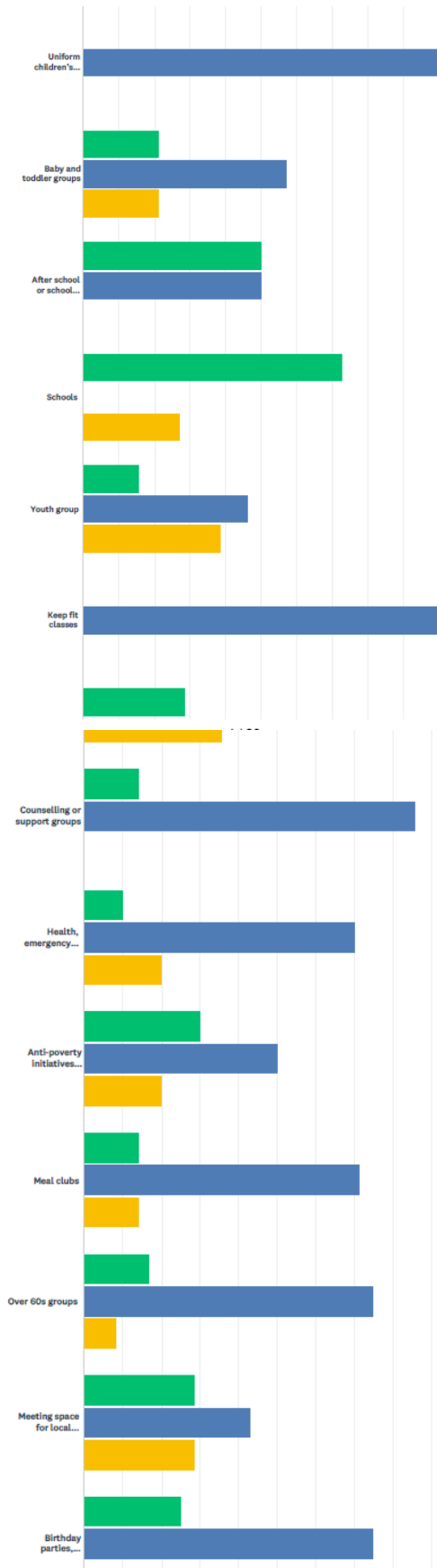
Q3 What types of groups regularly use the church building and hall?

- *In Church building* – 'visitors' are the most frequent answer, closely followed by schools and churchyard visitors
- *In Church hall* - over 60's groups and celebratory events are joint first, closely followed by health/emergency services/council use and counselling/support groups.
- *In both* - youth groups and leisure groups are the joint most frequent answer, followed by meeting spaces and visitors. Third most frequent are schools and baby/toddler groups.

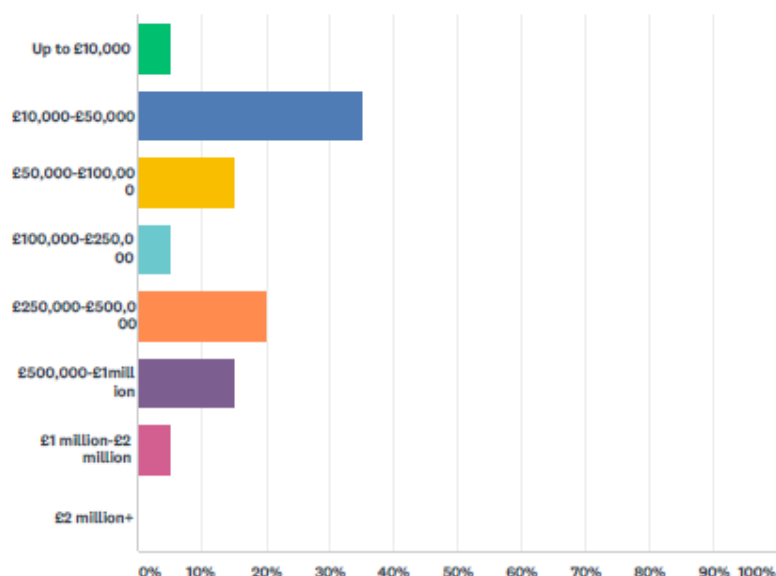
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Q3 What types of groups regularly use the church building and the church hall in addition to the congregation and those attending special services?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 2



Q4 Approximately how much has been spent on the church building and hall over the last ten years for repairs and/or improvements?



Q5 How was the money raised for the building work?

<i>Method</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>
Congregational giving*	10
Individual/specific donations*	8
Grants, including lottery fund	11
Normal or general church fundraising	7
Legacies	5
Fundraising events	3
Reserves	3
Rental income (e.g. room hire)	2
Loan or mortgage	2
Budgeting	2

(*Responses include multiple phrasings, therefore the meaning of 'donations' may refer to both congregational giving and community or business giving. Therefore, it is likely congregational giving may be greater than indicated.)

Q6 Do you have a Friends Scheme?

Most responses do not have a Friends Scheme, (16 responses), one respondent said yes, and three are considering it in the future. No respondents have a group that is no longer active.

(NB: the Diocese has a list of churches that it is aware of which have a Friends Scheme, currently totalling 19).

Q7 What difference has investing in the church building made to the life and impact of the church?

Summary - All but one church that has invested in the building have seen a positive impact, especially increased community engagement, improved ministry, and a more welcoming, accessible and comfortable space for a variety of different people's needs and interests.

Responses -

- Maintained the beauty of the church, which in turn brings our community together. Our collective goal is to preserve and conserve the fabric of our place of worship.
- A visible statement that we are here for the long term.
- Buildings now more welcoming and comfortable, groups enjoy and will come back. New projection system in church makes services / sermons more interesting, Space in the Church Hall is more adaptable giving more space for social events and for contact after services.
- New chairs in the church has improved comfort especially for the elderly and also given us greater flexibility on using the space. improvements to the kitchen has enabled us to offer soup and sandwich deliveries weekly to the housebound and isolated in our community and made it possible to hold meals on in church/hall for up to 80 people at a time. We have also recently opened a weekly "pop - in" café which will generate additional funds for the church. Improved heating has made the church warmer more quickly and made the church more comfortable for all. Turned a storeroom into the church office which has improved administration and communications; and provides a focal point for non - ministry

related enquiries. Hall is also used as a polling station for local and national elections generating a useful source of revenue.

- Increased community work and social aspect of church life.
- Limited refurbishment of a small hall has created small scale opportunities for pastoral and missional engagement.
- Kept the congregation dry, raised the profile of the church in the community, enabled development of heritage project.
- HUGE! The works of 14 years ago changed everything! It previously looked as though the church was closed, even when it was open. The building is now used something like 40 hours per week (including for worship) rather than the 10 or so previously. It has made the building a locus for our ministry to the town. Hundreds of people drop in each month. The 'town' knows that the church is open, active and available, and that 'we are for the town.
- Drawn the community into church for things other than services.
- Become more inclusive and has allowed a wider range of services attracting more people. More social events.
- Our church has to keep changing and evolving to meet the needs of its community and its mission. Encouragingly we have made a number of maintenance based enhancements to the Church Building and Church Hall over the last decade and ticked almost all the areas identified by the Diocese. At a basic level the Church has to maintain its fabric to allow the premises to keep functioning, i.e. heating lighting, keeping the rain out etc. These are considered maintenance requirements.
However, the Church Hall has received little substantial investment over recent years and the 1960s Church hall looks tired. Our link Building is only 25 years old and serves us well, but has flexibility issues. Therefore our hall is not particularly attractive and only functions for regular Church Hall users, who perhaps accept the hall as it is to some extent. The grounds have received a lot of focus through Messy Fellowship recently which has made an impact locally and some people come to support the Monthly maintenance sessions. This at a basic level gives witness to something is going

on at the church as it's easily visible from outside. So in summary, we have not invested significantly in its buildings over the last 10 years, and any impacts would not be due to the buildings.

- Made a more pleasant and comfortable environment for both church family and hall occupants.
- The PCC is confident that the new Centre will have a positive impact to the life of the church and the community. The church building itself is also the subject of considerable interest from visitors and tourists who comment on the high standard of building maintenance and general care.
- It has provided the space and resources to engage the local community and to enhance church life.
- It means we can offer hospitality before or after services, meetings or to other groups using the building.
- Massive. The church hall and its Cafe builds significant bridges to the community. The church as a grade 1 listed building is already an attractational feature.
- Flexibility. Made to be a more pleasant environment especially for groups to meet.
- New life to the church hall which is primarily used by the independent church.
- Huge benefit to mission.
- Considerable, enabling disability access to the hall, and greatly improved space and facilities.

Q8 Has investing in the building(s) made an impact on the growth of the church, either spiritually or numerically?

Summary - Overall, most building projects have played a role in numerical and/or spiritual growth, as the building has helped facilitate greater and new uses and therefore more opportunity for relationship - building. Both aspects of growth are equally mentioned 11 times each.

Four out of 20 said it was too early to comment, as the project had not long since completed. Four respondents said it had not led to growth.

Responses -

- Fund raising has brought our community together, which in turn has raised our numbers visiting and worshipping at our church.
- Better facilities make the church and hall more welcoming, thus encouraging community. Spiritually, improved lighting (in the church) and heating (in the new build hall) make for positivity. Some small improvement in attendance at main services.
- Hard to measure growth - numerically we have seen more people starting to attend, but there has been a drop - off as well. Spiritually the improved buildings have given increased opportunity for people to be involved in ministry, which has resulted in spiritual growth.
- The Church Centre has provided a venue for Messy Church and Little Fishes, the priority given to Baptisms by the Vicar has all been aimed at greater involvement of children and their parents and grandparents with considerable success.
- Too early to say, nothing measurable as yet.
- Its made people feel a bit more comfortable but hasn't necessarily made disciples because of the socialisation due to the issue raised in answer to question 11.
- Hard to quantify. Spiritually - arguably, through engagement of members of the congregation in helping with the project and in financial giving. Numerically - we hope in the future, through increased engagement with the community (project is current, roofing works are nearing completion). Improved AV facilities have greatly improved services, impact of this is significant but hard to quantify.
- Spiritually? It changed the mindset of the church to be more outward - focused, recognising that in God we have something special to offer. Numerically there are probably more people attending, but not as regularly. As previously said, total numbers

through the doors has rocketed, including some dropping in to worship. We feel as though we would not have attracted as many young families recently had we not done the work - it was a forbidding and less comfortable building then.

- Used the meeting room to hold services in the colder months as it is warmer than the main church.
- Yes. Different fresh expression services have added new people to our congregation and they have become active members of the church on the PCC and as helpers. It has also inspired 3 Alpha and 3 Lent courses as home groups.
- The biggest impact the Church has made in recent years has been on mission outside the building via Messy Church and Love Lache. Both these activities are undertaken off site independent of the building. So growth is likely to be in our wider worshipping community, rather than in our electoral roll or typical Sunday Worship numbers. We cannot yet evaluate yet whether investing in the Mission Shaped Church building project for a Mission Shaped Church will have an impact on growth of the Church.
- A more comfortable church enables people to focus on worship and a screen enables flexibility and wider choice of hymns and liturgy.
- Not yet.
- Several who go to functions/groups held in the church go on to join the church family especially youth and young families. There has been growth in spiritual maturity and some young people have gone on to Christian service. Investing in audio visual equipment has meant that corporate worship has been enhanced and kept fresh.
- It has impacted on disabled people who can visit church. Numbers attending services and visiting the church have increased.
- Some of our church building investment enabled our Christmas market initiative - which led to a 20% increase in attendance at carol services that year (and that has stayed high since). The Cafe in the church hall means something like 600 non - church people

per week pass through the building - and while it is hard to directly quantify how many moved from that to church, anecdotally I can name over 10, and I believe it has been more. That said, facilities only facilitate the relationships out of which faith is shared - none of it is simply the building - but it can help!

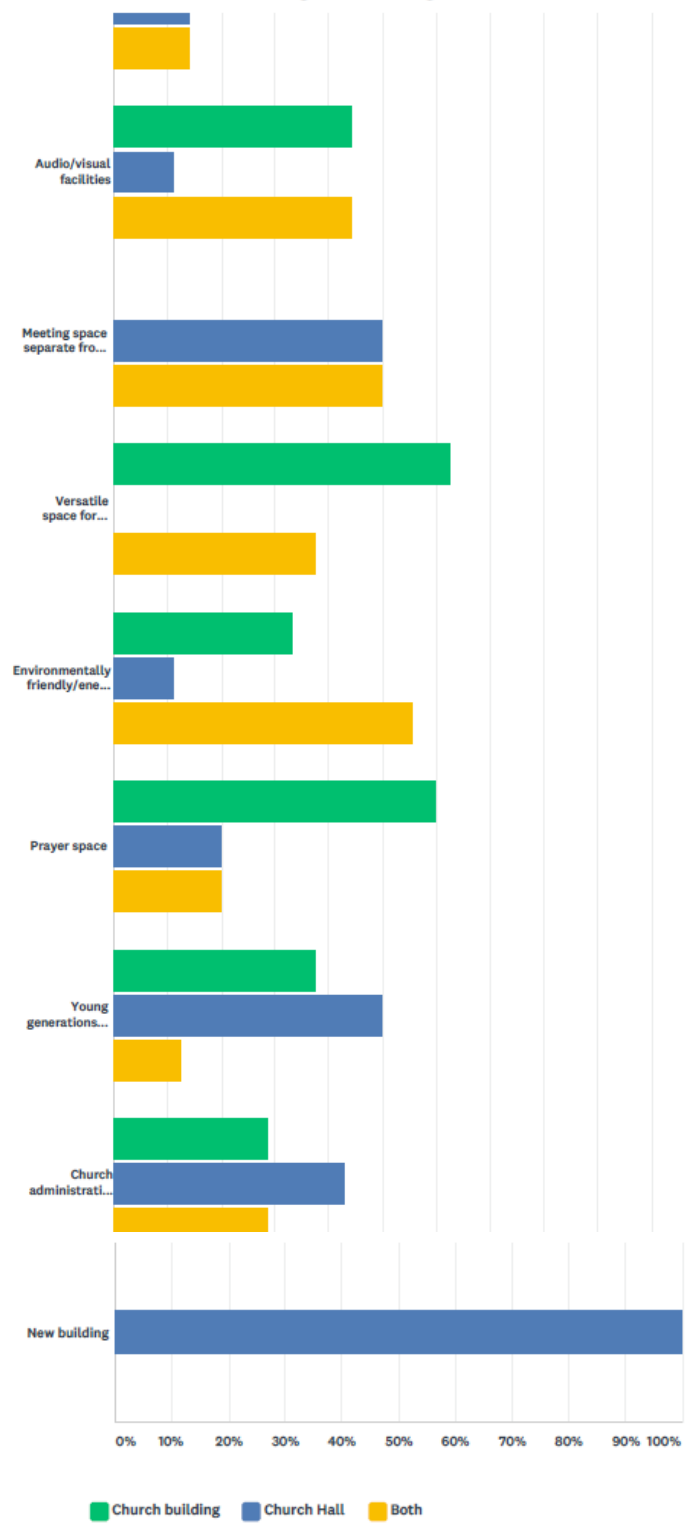
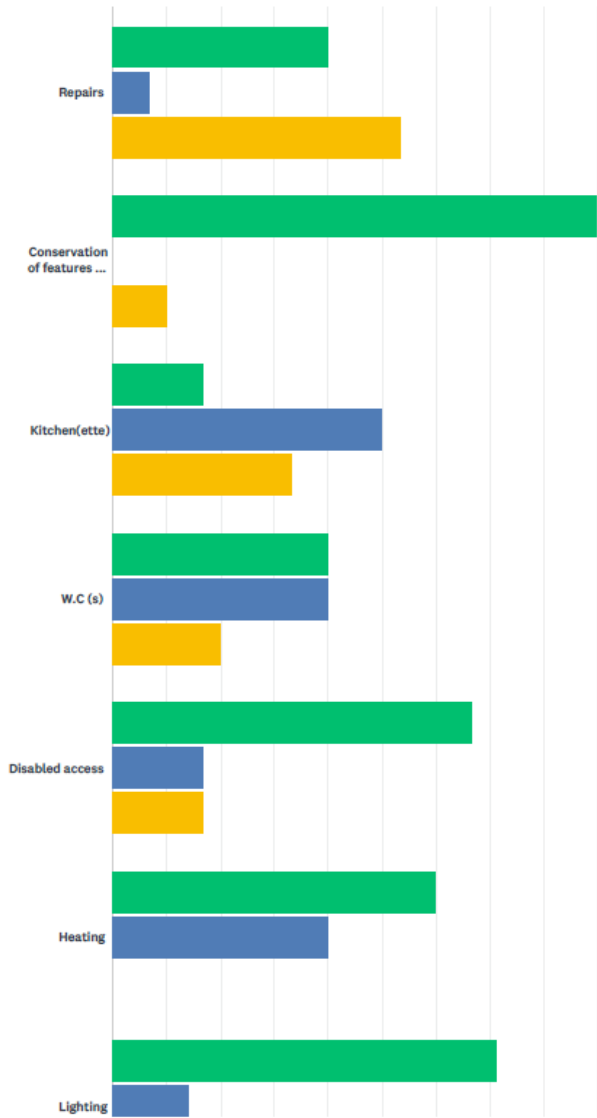
- Our youth work has space to grow and good facilities. Our main worship space is the same size but very flexible which allows use for new growing expressions of ministry like messy church and toddlers groups etc.
- Not at our church building, but probably at a neighbouring church, as they have more space to meet.
- Too early to say - we hope so to all those!
- Yes. It has enabled us to accommodate increase use of the space, including a community café now open 6 days a week.

Q9 Thinking about the future, what changes/improvements do you envisage carrying out in the next ten years?

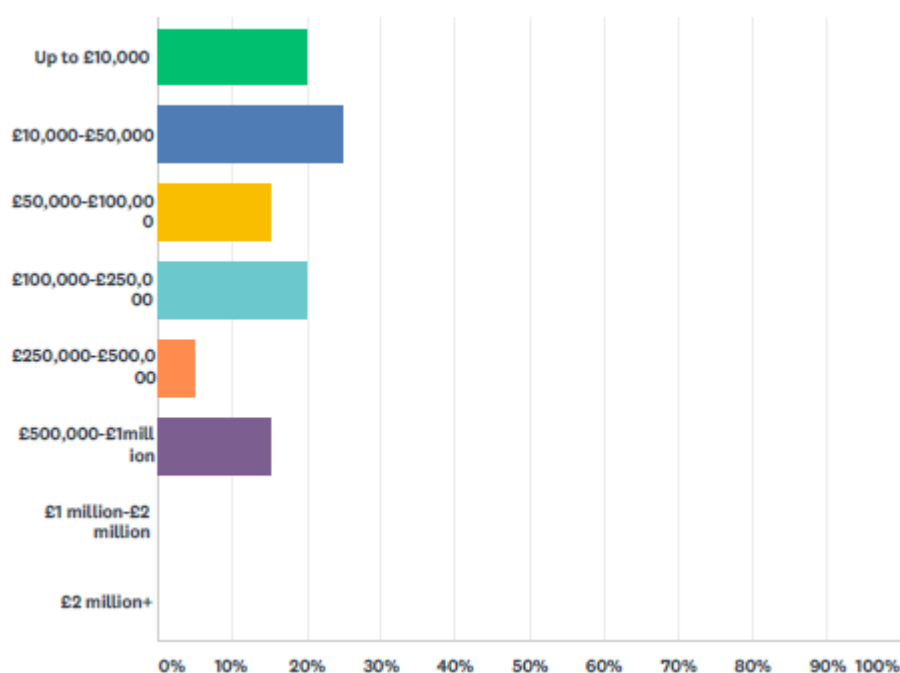
- *For church building* - conservation of features of the building is the most frequent need, followed by repairs, lighting and versatile space for mission and ministry.
- *For church hall* - a range of work is needed, but this has a lower level of need than work on church buildings (indicated by fewer responses). Work includes suitable facilities for young generations, kitchenette, W.C., and heating.
- *For both* - Repairs dominate the work needed, followed by environmentally friendly/energy efficiency work and A/V.

Please see the following survey chart for question 9.

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Q10 How much do you anticipate this future work will cost?



Q11 How do you think the spaces used by churches *inhibit* the growth of the kingdom of God in our Diocese?

Summary - Out of the ten responses, the most frequent was that church buildings create a negative first impression for those not familiar with entering them - they are spaces that can be intimidating, not welcoming, not comfortable, nor accessible. This was closely followed by too great an emphasis on buildings rather than people in terms of financial investment, time and church buildings having a 'heritage' focus. Thirdly, respondents mentioned some church buildings have unsuitable space for mission and ministry, which inhibit their use, especially for group activities and more contemporary forms of worship.

Responses -

- We believe we work closely and our 'sacred space' is valued and used efficiently.
- They can suggest a backward looking or "heritage only" image of Church.
- Churches can be alien buildings which people find it uncomfortable to enter.

- Access, especially when it is dark, can be an issue.
- A church that keeps its doors locked except on Sundays is by definition a place of exclusion. We therefore now have the church open from 09.00 until 12.00 every weekday; sometimes unattended (with valuables locked away).
- We have mixed views; some believe Churches present a big barrier to most people to even set foot inside. Once inside even if the welcome is good, the pews are hard the lighting poor and the service is a mystery to most people. Whereas others believe churches to be beautiful historic places and they appreciate Anglican traditions.
- We can too easily become fabric and maintenance focused. It can create a very static view as church as location rather than church as the people.
- Intimidating and alien environment for unchurched people. Uncomfortable seating. Cold & hard to heat. Often dark & dingy. Huge financial drain inhibits mission and ministry. Often inaccessible physically. Often unsuited to running groups for children etc. Cost and delay of faculty proceedings. Size of building (if too large or too small) restricts growth. Surrounded by graves & often dark churchyards.
- They can be a huge drain on financial resources, and so on time and energy to get funding - distracting us from the church's mission to make disciples. They can give two impressions of: 1. "everything is alright - if they have a building like this the church must be 'loaded'". 2. "church is not for me because my life is a mess, and doesn't connect with this beautiful (and gothic) building."
- Too rigid in their layout to encompass modern forms of worship and to be of use to other groups in the community. They can be depressing and oppressive, lacking a welcome. More importance can be given to the building as a museum by professional objectors to change rather than to the people who are the church and their

needs. The churches can be historic buildings but there must be a balance with their need to do God's work.

Q12 How do you think the spaces used by churches *enhance* the growth of the kingdom of God in our Diocese?

Summary - 19 responses were received, which is nearly double that of the previous question. The most frequent related to the role of church buildings as spaces where people meet with God. This was closely followed by loving service to the community. Further factors were a visible sign of God's presence in the community and one aspect in creating a positive church experience that people would want to return.

Responses -

- Our church buildings are loved and appreciated, by people of all ages, in our Diocese. Our spaces enable us to have a focal point for our worship.
- They are visible signs of God's presence in this place. They speak of God's love of people in life and in death. A well - kept church and churchyard shows WE care for environment, our worship, loved ones in churchyard.
- Comfortable buildings for funerals / weddings etc encourage people to come again.
- By allowing the use of the church for appropriate community events (our church is one of the few buildings locally with seating capacity for over 250) it builds links with local people. For example, the local primary school have their Christmas carol concert here. We recently held a concert with the Community Choir where we were joined by the children from the local Primary School choir which brought in an audiences of nearly 200 and raised £800 for Claire House; a local charity. This has a very positive effect on our image as a community supporter. The various initiatives to provide soup and sandwich, bereavement lunches, Thursday coffee mornings, Monday café, Young At Heart Club all run by the church from the church Hall provide additional support to the vulnerable and lonely in the community helping to build our presence and God's work. Plus, there are a number of children's activities in the hall helping to enhance the relationship with young families locally. The hall is also

used by other "non - church" groups (Guides/Rainbows); keep fit; yoga; badminton; TWGuild; Art classes, community choir, Family events etc. The hall is often used by families for refreshments after a funeral helping to provide support to people in a time of need; these events are usually "staffed" by members of the church.

- The recently refurbished church community centre is an asset that we need to fully utilize. It presents an opportunity to serve the community by positive and needed activities. People take ownership of these spaces to meet with God and experience his presence.
- For some coming into a traditional building can be helpful to aid persons spirituality.
- Some great examples of building projects, providing buildings accessible to and used by the community. People identify with church as theirs even if they don't come. Great not to have to set up a building each time we use it. With appropriate re - ordering and in good condition, can be attractive and practical facilities. Reverence and architecture and history resonates with people.
- The buildings tend to be very visible in the public space (enhancing when in good repair/distracting when poorly maintained) and people tend to know where their local one is. Through welcoming people into our buildings we can reflect something of God's warmth and welcome, and use them as vehicles for teaching about God and our faith, and as a quiet space in a noisy world, We also use them for social action and mission (foodbanks, night shelters, etc). Our spaces are also GREAT places for those times of public celebration and expressions of sorrow. Anglican buildings also tend to be the most inclusive in terms of ALL are welcome (even if not all can gain access!)
- The buildings can be inspiring, uplifting and a place of comfort and security. They can be welcoming and warm, bringing strangers into the love of God. Working together adds strength to our mission.
- Our church is often considered a welcoming Church. It is also the local Church for the Community and many people feel a connection to us. Recognising the "belong then believe", there is an opportunity to increase the use of the Buildings. This could meet a number of

needs and then people may move on in their Spiritual Journey. We recognised the need for increased Community use of the Buildings covering the areas identified in the Questionnaire. Encouragingly we are undertaking many of the activity listed. Our aim is to have a busy and lively Church Centre, aiming to be a Church in the Centre of the Community.

- A friendly, welcoming, comfortable, warm church that isn't stuffy.
- We are fortunate to have large spaces that allow us to serve the community in many different ways. Visitors using the facilities have expressed interest in the church by feeling comfortable as they make use of our spaces. Activities in the church and church centre help people to feel welcomed, loved and encounter God e.g. hundreds attend the Crib Service, a monthly lunch for the lonely. The different kinds of spaces allow us to respond to what people are coming for and what they need. We have missional communities in a hard to reach area, holding services in a local school building and a missional allotment, both meeting people where they are.
- If they are welcoming, appealing and accessible they will attract more people to worship in them and use them.
- - when they are used, flexible and attractive.
- The history of many faithful people gathering to worship and follow Jesus is a light in the community. We seek to reconnect people with their spiritual heritage and our building can help with this as it has been here for a while!
- When they are actively and creatively used to point people to Jesus Christ.
- Enormously! Looking at so many ways people use our spaces, it is only limited by our imagination.
- The location, profile and historic nature of the church make it iconic for the community and attract visitors.

Q13 How best do you think we, the Diocese of Chester, should move forward with regard to allowing 'sacred spaces' to flourish, and so in turn play their part in enabling The Church to flourish?

Summary - 18 responses were received. Comments covered a range of topics. The most frequent, (mentioned eight times), was to change the permissions process to be more flexible with making alterations, simpler, quicker, less bureaucratic and time - consuming, with some calling for more decisions to be made within the Church of England (Diocese and/or parish level) for buildings that are seeking minor changes or are not highly listed.

The second most frequent comment, (mentioned 6 times), was to be more missional. There was a call to be more balanced throughout the work of the Diocese, including priorities for discussions and strategic work, gaining approvals for change, financial investment (missional work, church halls as well as church buildings), and capacity building for parishes, with one call to make buildings financially self - sufficient beyond congregational giving.

This was closely followed by the need for more capacity at Diocesan level with buildings, including their missional potential, managing building projects and securing the finance, (mentioned five times).

The Diocese taking a more strategic approach to managing buildings was also raised five times, including closure of buildings that are no longer fit for the mission God intended and investing in those that do, combined with sharing space more frequently, both ecumenically and with the wider community.

Responses -

- Our beautiful ancient building enables us to achieve our mission.
- More multi - use of church buildings. Share buildings ecumenically. Close/mothball some churches. Churchyards should have environmental/green/recreational aspect.
- The Diocese needs to consider carefully the restrictions it imposes on churches, i.e. the faculty process. It's focus should be less about what can't be done rather providing an advisory service leading to approval, at speed and at low cost. The Diocese may consider itself to be exactly that, except the process does not lend itself to be so. It requires submission in a set format and then a response that

usually consists of a number of questions and then further consideration before approval – a lengthy bureaucratic process at best. Two examples: When we were considering installation of a new heating system we visited a number of churches that had done so. At one we asked about the faculty process. The incumbent responded that he didn't apply for one on the basis that whatever the response it would not be taken out! Our own experience with replacing the church pews – why a faculty should be required is a nonsense and serves no purpose. The fact that we have no faculty has made no difference. The fact that to replace chairs requires a retrospective faculty is all the more non - sensical. It's an illustration of a self - serving bureaucracy and is generally perceived negatively when it should be seen as a positive service. The Diocese needs to consider carefully how it can be so.

- Be much more flexible in allowing churches to make alterations that encourage people to actively play a part in church life in a pleasant and welcoming place for worship. Provide help and advice for projects enabling a flourishing church. Shorten procedures and delays in getting approval for change.
- Carefully assess each building - play up the very historical building (tours etc) , renovate well the buildings that are well located and can be renovated straightforwardly; those sapping resources that aren't significantly historical or well located - sell them or change use. In short use the building well or don't have it.
- Please improve the speed and efficiency of the faculty process. Become more accommodating during the process, recognising the practical use of the building for a worshipping community who give sacrificially to maintain and improve it. Encourage and support re - ordering and modernisation projects.
- The diocesan faculty system is too long - winded and too slow to respond. Particularly for smaller churches with fewer people with experience to drive/develop buildings projects (repairs and developments) - How many clergy are drawn into managing the projects. So a central diocesan team of experts (architects/surveyors/project managers/fund - raisers/etc) would help. Also to include help with communication for mission/heritage displays, etc Could the diocese be more supportive of development

for mission rather than as guardians for conservation and heritage. There are also too many church spaces of all denominations. The diocese could be a voice and mediator for ecumenical sharing of use and reducing the overall number whilst retaining a sense of local identity.

- Draw people in.
- Respect, encourage and support congregations in altering their churches to suit all forms of worship and use. The faculty process should be simplified and streamlined to reduce timescales. Reports on plans are expensive, take too long and generally reveal nothing new. Architects and the DAC should be able to make decisions, unless the building is Grade 1, to reduce the power of outside bodies objecting. These frequently have no church base, have no alternative solutions and run up bills while offering nothing.
- A reflection is that the Diocese focuses on the Church Building only, via the Quinquennial report. This tends to lead to action on the Church building, and our hall has been somewhat overlooked. So it would be good for the Quinquennial report to look at the all the Church buildings in the future which are potentially available for Mission. That way we keep a more balanced outlook. Recently there has been more workshops with other Churches where good practice can be shared. The Diocese should continue to promote these so we can share good practice between Churches. Consideration of a "Church Health Audit" to see what we do well, and what we may not be seeing currently against the 5 marks of Mission. So thus balancing the focus on Buildings with the Focus on Mission. It is recognised that this is onerous for the smaller parishes, but should be available to bigger parishes in a more systematic way, perhaps as part of Archdeacons visitation?
- Help with finance or in obtaining finance.
- By having a flexible and open approach and ensuring money goes where needed, eg pioneering and missional communities and not necessarily only into buildings. Removing unnecessary bureaucracy and hindrances that faculties and listed buildings can provide.

- The diocese is too restrictive in its reluctance to embrace modern practices in resolving architectural problems and interior decoration.
- Pro - active advice on making spaces more useable, flexible and attractive.
- Being proactive in supporting churches to develop their sites to be more flexible and 'usable'. Making 'updating' church spaces easier and, where possible, removing restrictions and conditions which can increase the cost (and sometimes make any project too expensive).
- Every 'sacred space' needs to pay for itself independent of congregational giving.
- Help people conduct time management surveys of their buildings - so max use made 24/7 of space we have.
- Supporting schemes that enable flexible use of church buildings, ideally including grants.

Any other comments

- At a time, when for many, incomes are relatively static and inflation is increasing; it is becoming very difficult to encourage increased planned giving but the cost of repairs continues to climb. We are fortunate that we have received legacies which have enabled us to undertake some improvement work but for those churches where this is not happening then the prospect of maintaining their buildings must be a nightmare. Even simple things cost a huge amount (for example cleaning our church guttering was well over £3000 of which the bulk was for scaffolding). Given that our planned giving and general income just about meets the parish share we have very little left over for repairs; and to ask the congregation to come up with more money would in some cases be a step too far. As a warden I dread the day when we need to undertake a major repair, so far I have been fortunate but I do worry about this for the future.
- Provide long awaited training to spread the good news in the community to anyone we meet.

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- Always hold the theology of 'the church as people' the driver for this. Also don't be afraid to ask is this building fit for purpose.
- Buildings are incidental... it is the people who are important when building God's kingdom.
- The faculty system is a nightmare.
- Consider insurance for use of buildings by outside groups.