



stMary's
STOKE BISHOP

Church Rooms Development Project

Enhancing the building to improve accessibility and increase capacity.



What's the story so far?

St Mary's Church was reordered in 2011, completing Phase 1 of a two-phase project, with Phase 2 being the redevelopment of the Church Rooms, modernising the rest of the building ready for the next phase of church life.



For the last eleven years we have enjoyed the benefits of worshipping in our warm, welcoming, reordered church, but in contrast **our Church Rooms continue to show signs of age, and no longer feel entirely fit for purpose.**

Since 2011 the PCC has been steadily working towards making this vision a reality. Plans were drawn up and planning permission was granted in 2019. In March 2020, just two weeks before the world went into lockdown, we launched this project to the church family, inviting people to make pledges towards the cost of the work.

The pandemic inevitably slowed the pace, as our energies were diverted away from the long-term future, in order to navigate the challenges of the present season. But time ticks on, and given that the planning permission expires in June 2022, there is a need to pick up the pace again.

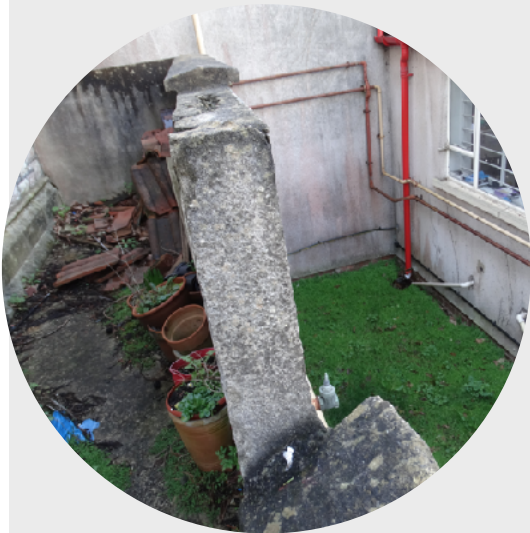
All at St Mary's are being invited to consider whether they would be willing to support this project financially. At this stage we need pledges of support, rather than the gifts themselves.

Why are we doing this project?

There are three compelling reasons why the PCC has agreed to pursue this project.

Welcome for all

Currently our Church Rooms are not easily accessible for everyone. Access into the building is difficult for those with impaired mobility or people using wheelchairs or pushchairs, and there is no accessible toilet for users of the main hall when other rooms are in use by different groups. There is also no internal access between the church and the halls for those in wheelchairs, or for people who cannot easily navigate stairs. **St Mary's aspires to be a church that is welcoming to everyone. Currently, our building layout hampers this aspect of our mission.**



Good stewardship

The Church Rooms were built in the 1960s and extended in the 1980s thanks to the generosity of previous generations of Christians. We have a responsibility to be good stewards of what we have been given, to further God's work in our parish and beyond. Very little adaptation or significant maintenance has taken place since the 1980s. The church community is responsible for the care of our buildings, and **part of this project includes the urgent repairs needed to ensure that the buildings are water-tight and able to be safely used.**

Allowing for growth

We pray that St Mary's will continue to be a place where people are regularly coming to faith in Jesus, resulting in church growth. **The development project will result in additional spaces for church and community groups to use.** The Church Rooms are already in high demand by individuals and organisations, due to the lack of other local community spaces.



What improvements will be made?

Welcome, access and connectivity

Under the new scheme the Church Rooms will have an **attractive foyer, with a low-gradient ramp from the car park**. The current ramp to the Hulbert Room is much steeper than regulations now allow.

There will be **a lift between the church and the Church Rooms**, giving easy access for all between the two spaces.



Access to the Church Rooms from the street, and from the foyer to the church is currently difficult for those with reduced mobility, and parents with pushchairs

Toilets

All the main toilets in the Church Rooms will be upgraded, bringing them up to modern standards, improving accessibility and baby changing facilities.



The toilets do not come up to modern standards

Kitchen

The kitchen would be substantially enlarged and fitted out to standards required by Environmental Health for the church family, and external caterers, to prepare hot meals for larger numbers of people.



The existing kitchen is cramped and largely outdated

Additional meeting room

An Upper Room located above the current toilets and office will provide **an extra self-contained space**, with a servery and accessible toilet, that can be accessed by everyone via stairs or the lift.

Improved office and storage space

Our employed and volunteer staff team will all be able to have space to work under the **new configuration of the office space**, improving communication and providing better reception facilities. Storage space throughout the Church Rooms will also be improved.



*Our staff team is regularly 'hot desking' due to lack of space.
Inadequate storage provision exacerbates the problem.*

Security, eco-considerations and essential repairs

The main entrance doors to the Church Rooms will be replaced for **modern doors** which are more secure and retain heat. The windows in the Church Rooms will be replaced with new **double glazed windows**,

reducing energy loss and heating costs. The main hall, Hulbert Room and Evans Room will be redecorated as



necessary and essential improvements made, including a replacement external door to the Hulbert Room to allow those rooms to be used by groups independently of the other areas of the Church Rooms. If funds allow, the intention is to re-cover and insulate the low-pitched roof over the main hall and flat roof over the foyer and offices (which usually has a 10-15 year life span and has not been replaced since construction in the 1960s).



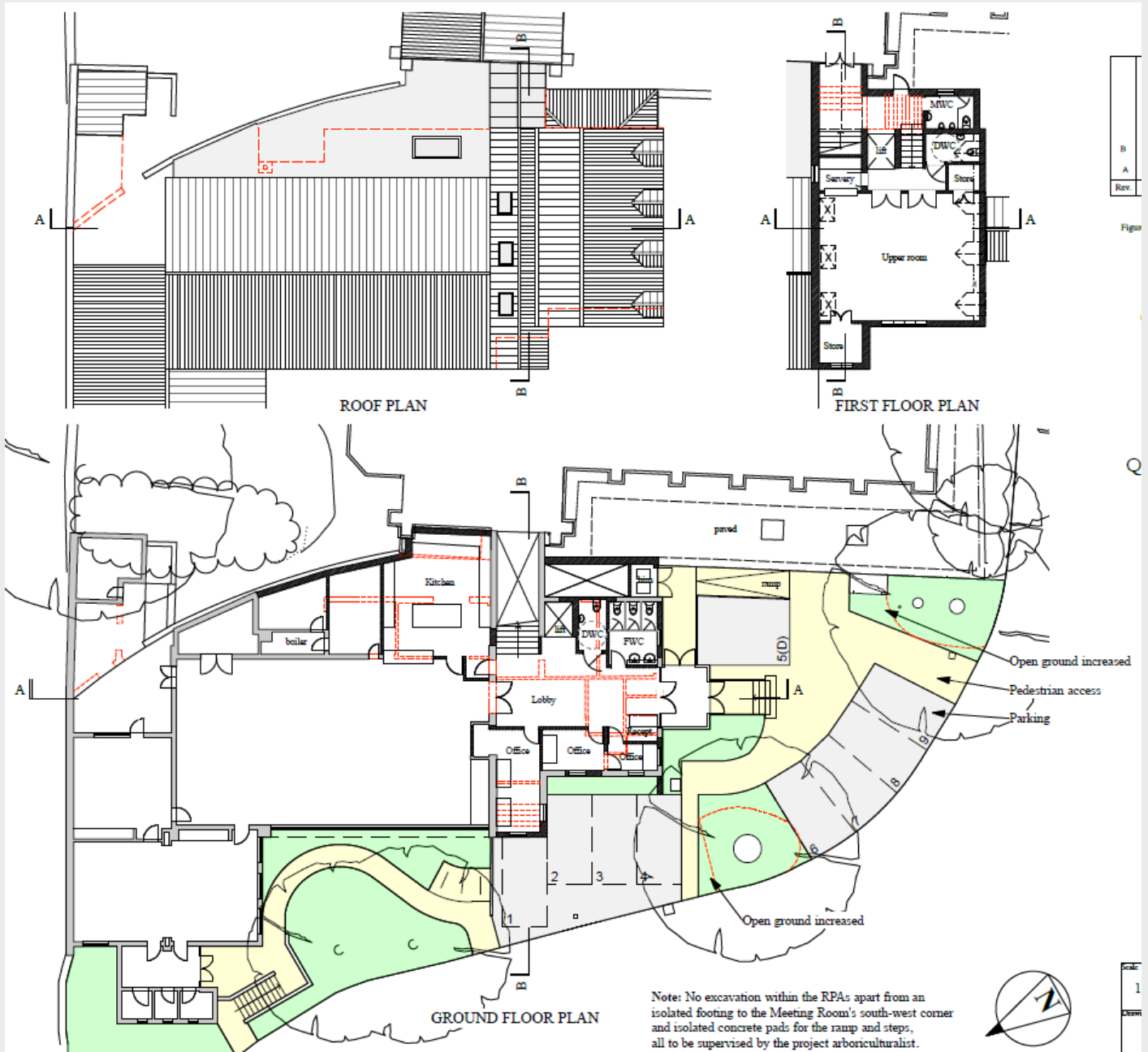
The building plans

Exterior views



The building plans

Interior views



The large scale drawings can be viewed in church.

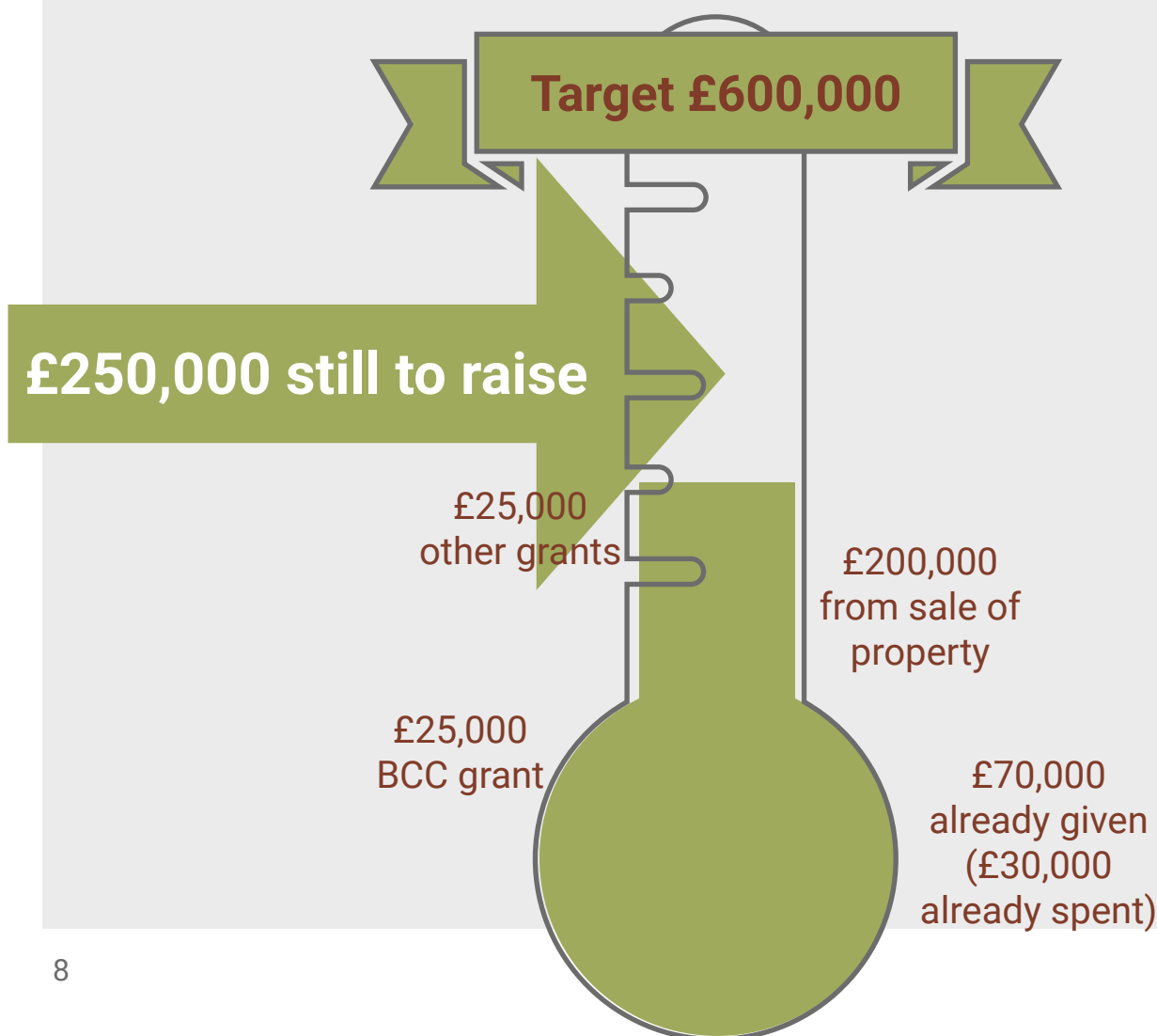
It sounds great, but what will it cost?

It will cost £600,000 to implement the plans which have been approved by St Mary's PCC and Bristol City Council, and which the diocese supports. This figure includes a 12% contingency fund.

£70,000 has been donated so far (of which £30,000 has already been spent) and Bristol City Council has awarded a grant of £25,000.

After carefully considering the options **the PCC has approved the sale of a residential property currently owned by the church.** At least some of the proceeds of the sale of this property will be invested into the Church Rooms project. The PCC will agree later in the year how much of the proceeds to use, but it is likely to be at least £200,000. It is probable that we will be able to obtain at least another £25,000 from grant-making trusts.

We need to raise £250,000 primarily from gifts made by the church family.



An invitation to dig deep

There's no doubt that the plans are ambitious.

Anglican churches are almost entirely funded at a local level. Regular giving from the church family enables St Mary's to fulfil our aim of *following Jesus and making Him known*.

In practice, this involves the costs of ordained leaders and employed staff, support for our Mission Partners and the cost of running a large building. We want to continue to be a blessing to our community in Stoke Bishop and beyond, and so **any gifts made towards this building project, need to be in addition to our regular giving which enables the church to operate day to day.**

Some will be able to give a lot – thousands, or even tens of thousands of pounds. Others will be able to give a smaller amount. We are all invited to dig deep.

At this stage, we need pledges of commitment, not the gifts themselves, and there is an option to spread your giving over 12-18 months, whilst the work is taking place, instead of giving a lump sum. If you are a UK Taxpayer, Gift Aid can be claimed on your donations too.



If you consider St Mary's
to be your church,
please pray about
whether you could give
towards this project

Making your pledge

During March and April please consider what you could give to this project. **When you are ready, complete the form on the back of the booklet and return it to the church office.**

It would be very helpful if you could **make your pledge by Sunday 1st May 2022.**

The total of the pledged donations will be shared with the PCC at its meeting on 4th May. This will help the PCC to decide whether to give approval for the building work to begin this year, before the planning permission expires in June 2022. At this stage, we only need to demonstrate that the work has begun, and this can be in a small way which won't cause disruption, in order to secure the planning permission indefinitely. This gives us time in the latter part of the year to appoint a building contractor, with a view to the substantial work commencing in 2023.

Back in 2020, many church members generously made pledges towards this project, but we realise that a lot has changed since then, including some people's financial situation.

Even if you made a pledge in 2020 please complete the form again and let us know how much you are now able to give.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to prayerfully consider whether you can support this important project.

If God wants this redevelopment to happen, we can be confident that the money will be provided for it.

The small print!

Loans or mortgages will only be considered as an absolute last-resort. It is also important that this building project doesn't distract us from our core purpose as a church – following Jesus and making Him known. Fundraising will therefore not take place through a series of large-scale events, but rather through the generous giving of the church family and the other funding streams outlined here.

The figures quoted are based on costings from 2019, and recently the price of building materials has increased. However, the 12% contingency and inflation fund may well be sufficient to cover this. Also included is VAT at 20% on the whole project, but at least some of the works will be exempt from VAT (that relating to disabled access), which will be an additional saving on the overall cost.

Timescale

March-April 2022

Church family makes pledges
towards the project

May 2022

PCC decides whether
to begin the works

June 2022

Work begins (in a small way)
to secure the planning permission

January 2023

PCC decision on the contractor

April 2023

Main works begin

End of 2023

Possible completion

Finding out more

If you have questions or would like to know more about the rationale behind the project, there are two opportunities to meet with the Vicar and others on the PCC who have been closely involved with the plans.

Monday 14th March, 7-8pm via Zoom

Meeting ID: 822 8810 5515 Passcode: stmarys

Sunday 20th March, 11.30am in the hall

(following the 10am combined service that day)

Pledge towards the Church Rooms Development Project

Name(s):

Contact email (or phone number if not on email):

Pledge amount:

Please indicate whether you are able to donate this as a lump sum, or whether you intend to spread the gift over several instalments. The development period will be from June 2022 - December 2023; gifts could be spread over that period as monthly (or less frequent) instalments.

Please tear off this form and return it in an envelope to the Church Office by Sunday 1 May 2022. Alternatively you can email your pledge amount to stewardship@stmarysb.org.uk and Tony Hughes, St Mary's Giving Officer will receive this.

By giving us this information you are consenting for St Mary's to contact you in due course to invite you to turn your pledge into an actual gift.



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