



Reverend Gary Best,
Vicar,
The Parish Church of St. Mary, Shortlands,

For Future Generations

Having now settled into my role as Vicar of St. Mary's, I have become increasingly excited at the potential opportunities that the redevelopment project of St. Mary's offers to the community of Shortlands.

With buildings that are already well used by the church and the community, there is clearly a lot more that St. Mary's can offer in respect of enhancing the quality of local community life through the redevelopment of its buildings.

I have had many conversations since my arrival about the 'church doing more in the community' and it is this heart for mission and outreach that can affect us all. Whether offering a 'drop-in' café, or a monthly lunch club; space being provided for concerts or meetings for local organisations; redeveloping the existing church space has an opportunity to enhance life in Shortlands.

Alongside regular services, St Mary's hosts special services for local schools and pre-schools, and at times such as Remembrance Sunday. We are available to everyone for pastoral and spiritual support in the midst of everyday life, at times of celebration and sadness. As we live through a period of rapid change, we want facilities that will help us be more flexible and effective in our pastoral and spiritual service to all.

As a first phase of renewing all our buildings, we are launching the **Future Generations** project. This will provide St Mary's church building with improved heating, insulation and flexible seating, enabling it to be used for a far wider range of community and church activities.

What's planned?

- **A warmer church:** The church heating system will be replaced with an energy efficient underfloor heating system.
- **Moveable seating:** Fixed pews will be replaced with moveable pews or chairs. The new seating configuration will be appropriate for traditional services, whilst providing a greater flexibility for meetings and community events, as well as more informal church services.
- **Tea/coffee:** A tea and coffee facility will be installed within the church in a manner sympathetic to the building. This will enable us to offer a range of hospitality to the local community.
- **Accessibility:** We will also look at improvements to accessibility into and around the church, improving the entrance doors and upgrading the electrical and lighting system.

We estimate that these works, if we were to do them all, will cost up to £474,000. We believe that we can do some of the work ourselves, which will bring the costs down by £50,000 - £100,000 and we will be making applications to charities that fund similar projects. We will also undertake fundraising and will be seeking individual donations to cover the rest of the costs.

Whilst we are still considering the future of our church halls and offices, adapting the main church building will help provide space to church hall users during future renovation work to the hall or rebuilding programme.

I am personally very excited about the future possibility of providing a community hub for this community through the church, a vision that I hope you share too. In the meantime, if you have any questions or wish to know more about this exciting project, please call 020 8460 5682 or email office@stmaryshortlands.church.

Revd. Gary Best, Vicar, St. Mary, Shortlands