

The PCC of St Peter & St Paul Steeple Aston would like to thank David, Paul, Malcolm & Ian for their letter in last month's SAL.

PCC minutes show we have been looking at things like heating and access and kitchen space and loos for at least quarter of a century, never without controversy, always with lots of passion on all sides. This project is the nearest we have come to actually doing something and inevitably nobody is getting everything they want.

Some of us wanted to remove all the pews: there's no way that's happening! Some of us wanted renewable energy sources for our new heating, and very sadly it looks like we can't make that work. Lots of us wanted to solve access issues by raising the nave floor, and we've had to let go of that one too.

Through it all, from the first (information & question filled) public meeting, through three annual church meetings (open to anyone so everyone could hear news - and get a chance to vote every year as to whether they thought we should keep going), and of course through these letter pages, one thing has sounded out loud and clear:

People in Steeple and Middle Aston care about their village - and their church. We care about each other. As the PCC of the church here, we've been delighted to receive all sorts of input from all sorts of people. So far we've sent every letter that's appeared in these pages to the diocese, so that everyone's questions have been heard not just by us - but by the diocese too.

As PCC members, we are trustees of the church, with responsibilities given to us. As we work through this process, there are things actually required of us and we take them very seriously. So please send us your emails and letters or just talk to us - it may be you have a question that will make our project much, much better. Some suggestions have done just that. Thank you. And if we can't say yes to yours just now, perhaps we can explain why.

We're working with the Diocese of Oxford (the DAC is their committee that cares for church buildings) which is supporting us as we move toward applying for a faculty (the church equivalent of planning permission), we've met with some of the national amenity societies that have particular regard for heritage and we are trying to ensure the others are coming to see us soon. We very much hope that before year's end we will be able to put on an exhibition weekend so everyone can come and see exactly what we hope to do - and why. And we'll make sure there's plenty of opportunity for questions too.

We are genuinely excited. The church isn't just a wonderfully beautiful building, it's people: people who live here. People who love God and want to help other people. We are excited because this project isn't just loos and pews - it's about showing how much we love God and about taking time to work out how we can help people here today enjoy our church building and use it for years to come.

Graham Clifton, Rebecca Hoare, Jeana Atkins, Eileen Baglin-Jones, Caroline Compston, Jeanette Cotterill, Martin Dale, Edwina Kinch, Shirley Palmer, David Stewart, Mary Williams, May Woods