

# BUILDING PROJECT PROPOSALS



1. **'Open House'** Some of us have been talking about opening up the church '24 / 7' That would be great. But we have to be realistic and we have to start somewhere. How about planning towards two further 'Open House' times in the week in addition to our present Sunday morning and evening, when anyone coming in will be guaranteed a welcome, a place to pray and be alone or to talk to someone if they would like to, and when ideally there will be one or two other activities going on to suit a variety of tastes?
  - To picture Open House at its best you have to remodel the building in your mind, imagining a really attractive central **concourse area** with a **prayer room** and an **activity room** opening off it.
  - We are thinking of a weekly late morning slot .... crafts, cookery etc with an accent on discovery and 'self-help', Some of us can see this developing into into a 'social enterprise' project, (with a clear 'social' aim, but set up as a business)
  - and a weekly evening slot that could begin with a simple act of worship, and could be hosted by cells or specially formed teams on a rota basis, taking responsibility for a month at a time.

## 2. Worship Area Prayer Room

- **Worship Area:** We are proposing remodelling the main worship area to encourage richness, freedom and variety in our worship. God asks us to love him with our whole being, bodies, senses and emotions as well as minds and voices.
    - replacing the pews with easilly stackable chairs
    - renewing the floor area
    - planning to use screens, lighting and AV so that the main area may be set up in many different ways for different uses and occasions, or broken up into small intimate spaces when desired.
  - **Prayer Room:** If we envisage a more heavily used building it becomes all the more desirable to set aside a part of the building for a chapel or prayer room which would be, like the main area, a flexible space... pictures, lights, message boards etc, but always quiet and available for private prayer.
3. **Childrens' Centre (0s to 5s)** We have been approached again by the Childrens' Centre people to see if St.Simon's could be made available as a 'satellite centre'. The main offices and some activities will be based at the Havelock Centre, but they anticipate that there will still be scope for quite a lot of activities on our premises.
    - This would not be a case of handing over to them a part of the building to do what they liked with, but of contracting to use parts of the building for so many sessions a week, paying us rent, sharing our facilities and paying a

proportion of maintenance costs. The most likely scenario is that these activities would be concentrated in the Church Centre with the South Room becoming a permanent dedicated creche. At the moment, during the daytime the Church Centre is currently unused for many hours a week.

- We have been told that money would be available to help to upgrade toilets, storage areas, and possibly the entrance halls.
- This would all be about partnership. The role of the Centre Management would be to work with a range of providers and the parents themselves to deliver a comprehensive and quality service. We could offer our own activities, such as our Parent and Toddler Group alongside other organisations. And parents would learn about what else we have to offer on their visits to the building.
- The PCC considered this proposal long and hard. This is a tremendous opportunity to serve the community and to open up St.Simon's to a lot more young families. These Children's Centres are having a very positive effect in helping young mums and dads to meet the challenge of parenthood, and to give the best possible start for their children.
- nevertheless we recognise that there are certain genuine fears attached to what is being proposed. PCC is giving a priority to revising the guidelines we use for deciding what sort of activities we will permit on the premises.

4. **Youth Office** Jo would like to experiment with working more from our building. Ofori will need a base to work from while he is with us.
5. **The Future of the Organ** It would be wrong to go into a Project like this without letting the congregation be aware that there is a question mark over the future of the organ. It is a fine instrument. But it is in desperate need of refurbishment. The cost of this was recently quoted at £86,000. So we have to ask the question whether we want to restore the organ, or replace it with a more modest instrument. If we were to decide for the latter, the space occupied by the present instrument would be freed up for other uses.