

Your rector's Letter

St Mary's Building for You

In this month's letter I'd like to reveal a bit more about the transformation project for St Mary's church. It is our vision to transform our church by building an annexe, upgrading and re-ordering our church in order to provide updated facilities and improved flexibility.

It isn't an understatement to say that this project may be considered as one of the greatest ventures that has been undertaken in our community for decades. Therefore, I'd like to invite you to a presentation in St Mary's Church on Saturday 9th June at 3pm, and again at 4pm, when we will explain what the project involves.

We hope to see you at one of our presentations on Saturday 9th June at 3 or 4pm.

St Mary's is on the brink of deepening its involvement in the life of the community. We have always been at the heart of this town but over the last few decades we have seen an increase in need for the church as a venue for community use alongside our primary role as a place of worship. The grade II* listed building is an architectural treasure. It is a place where everyone is welcome.

Swing open the church doors

In recent years we've seen growth in numbers at services and events, a rise in activities for families and children, an increase of community events, a growing number of cultural and educational happenings. I hope you agree with me that our church is a flourishing place for Christian worship and Community cohesion.

But together we can do more and better. Our facilities and the flexibility it offers are outdated. So, let's swing open these church doors and provide the Wivenhoe residents with a beautiful historic building adapted to the needs of our time with modern facilities.

If you can help...

In the last eighteen months, St Mary's has invested nearly £200,000 upgrading our existing heating and sound system, and installing a new AV system. Funds have been raised towards new lighting which - we hope - will be installed in 2018 alongside the continued development work required before we can start building our new Annexe. Now these improvements have been realised, we humbly and with faith in this great project seek your support for the next phase as we launch our Transformation Project Appeal to raise the remaining £385,000 we require.

St Mary's Transformation Project is about reshaping the church into a Building for You. This is only possible with your help and support. I know that in the end the viability of a project of this importance comes down to donations, grants and legacies. We need to show that Wivenhoe recognises the possibilities of St Mary's in our community, a contribution in support of our appeal will help to attract grants from other grant making bodies.

Please spread the news about these amazing plans. If you would like to consider a donation, please use the leaflet for your positive response. Whatever you are willing to give, is welcome and appreciated. You can help in several ways which are outlined on our website and in the leaflet that you may have found in your letterbox, but if not, leaflets are available from me, Appeal Chair Peter Hill, members of the Appeal team and in church.

A message from the Bishop of Colchester

Bishop Roger of Colchester visited the official appeal launch in May and said:

“Wivenhoe is a great place. The Sunday Times rated it as one of the best places to live in the country. It has a wonderful sense of community and there are always things going on. I am delighted that the church has had the vision to provide Wivenhoe with the facilities it needs so that it can support the many thriving community groups and social events that are part of its rich social scene. The new annexe will provide Wivenhoe with a start-of-the-art community room and the re-ordering of the church will allow the nave to function once more as the ‘people’s place’ - a place for meetings and all kinds of events - which is what it was before the Georgian reordering of the eighteenth century and the introduction of fixed pews. I have been hugely impressed by the Transformation Project Steering Group’s commitment to listening to the local community and with the very high quality of the work that they have already done. This is a project of which the whole community can be proud.”

We welcome these comments from the Bishop and admire his enthusiasm and great heart for Wivenhoe. With him I believe that our project is enabling St Mary’s to play an even greater role in our community. I hope you feel able to join me in supporting the Appeal. Thank you!

May God bless you and the Parish of St Mary-the-Virgin in Wivenhoe.

Erwin