



# Welcome to the Binsted Church Re-ordering Open Meeting

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019

# Holy Cross Church – Past, present and the future

## The Past

Binsted Church has been at the heart of village life for over 900 years, standing as a witness to our Christian faith. It is the place where countless Binsted villagers have met together regularly to worship, reflect and pray, to christen their children, celebrate their weddings and bury their loved ones. It is where many of us still worship every week.

It is also the place where we hold our local C of E School services, our Harvest Festival lunch, occasional Flower Festivals and concerts, and the hugely popular annual Real Nativity. We all enjoy having this beautiful building in our midst, seeing its tower and spire from the fields around, and hearing its bells ringing over the countryside.

The Church was built and loved by past generations of Binsted villagers. We want to conserve our beautiful Church and pass it on in the best possible state, so our children and grandchildren may enjoy it as we have.

## The Present

The Church is carefully maintained, but it is over 150 years since it last received any significant attention (from the Victorians in 1863). Would you neglect your own house that way? In many ways the Church is uncomfortable and its facilities do not meet modern expectations or the current Equal Opportunities and Health & Safety requirements for a public building.

The Wickham Institute has been upgraded recently so it is better equipped to fulfil its function, which it does admirably, so far as it can, for many village events - and we don't wish to change that.

But the Church is different - and larger - so as well as for its primary function of worship, it could be used by and serve the community in many other ways.

We would like to re-equip the Church so it too is 'fit for purpose' and complies with best modern standards and with current legislation. So what do we want to do?

## The Future

We want to ensure that the Church is equipped to fulfil its purposes of serving the people of Binsted through Worship, Mission and Community involvement.

The Church is a Grade I listed building, so we need to work with specialist Church architects and the heritage societies to ensure that all we do is carried out to the highest standards and is sensitive to the historic significance of the building.

## **We are looking to -**

1. Install new underfloor heating, which will run at a low constant temperature, so the Church is warm and welcoming. This will protect the Church from persistent damp and avoid temperature fluctuations which are not good for the structure.
2. Adjust the floor levels so we can offer proper access for disabled people and comply with Health & Safety standards as well as Equal Opportunities.
3. Install toilet and baby changing facilities, so Church members, visitors and young families feel more welcome.
4. Install simple catering facilities, so we can be more hospitable and avoid having to take home dirty cups and utensils.
5. Upgrade the lighting, to assist the congregation and those using the Church building and so we see the building to best advantage. In addition to also have adequate emergency back-up when required. Upgrade the sound and audio equipment and look to getting WiFi available inside the Church.
6. Explore the options for movable and more flexible seating arrangements so the congregation and community can use this beautiful space in a wider range of different ways.
7. Open up and clean the beautiful medieval Westcote Chapel, so it is available for a creche for children's Church, for Messy Church, a meeting room or other activities. For example, it could be used by the Village School.
8. Install proper lighting and access to the unique Crusader knight's tomb (which was restored in 1994) in the Westcote Chapel so we can appreciate the oldest known celebrity resident of Binsted!
9. Preserve the Lady Chapel as a sacred space dedicated to quiet prayer and contemplation.
10. Move the organ console to the main body of the Church, so the organist can play alongside the worshippers and provide more effective musical support.
11. Upgrade the bell-ringers' facilities in the tower so that they comply with appropriate safety standards.

## **Cost?**

For the time being, we are looking at all options and moving forward in faith. To do a good job will inevitably be expensive and the total cost is likely to be between £0.7m and £0.9m, but the work can be completed in stages as funds become available. We already have (restricted) funds for some of the work; we would expect to attract grants from a range of organisations for other parts, and would encourage individuals to sponsor specific elements which particularly appeal to them. Beyond that, we would invite all the village to play their part in supporting the project, if they wish.

## **Conclusion**

Our Church is the centre of our Christian and village community. We have a responsibility to conserve, not merely preserve, the heritage of the building that we have inherited from past generations, stretching back over 900 years. We should see ourselves as a link in this chain, which will enable Binsted Church to flourish far into the future.

## **The Team:**

Yann Dubreuil (Vicar)

Christopher Ogilvie Thompson (Assistant Priest)

Kathy Ogilvie Thompson (Churchwarden)

Stella Croom-Johnson (Churchwarden)

Liz Carey (Assistant Churchwarden)

Andrew Hunter Johnston (Chairman, Reordering Committee)

## **PCC members and reordering committee:**

Nick Carter

Angela Dunne

Andrew Hunter Johnston

Kay Hunter Johnston

Helen Macdonald

Ron Neil

Sue Stephenson

Cathie Weldon

Piers Wilson

## **Architect:**

Antony Feltham-King