

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people

Galatians 6:9-10a

ST JAMES' COMMUNITY HUB



Keith Brindle

Rev Dr Keith Brindle, 13th January 2019
On behalf of the Church Wardens, PCC and Community Hub Project Team

The Community Hub Project Team are:

Keith Brindle, Vicar
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TRANSFORMING
LIVES
THROUGH
CHRIST
JAMES
CHURCH

A ONCE IN A GENERATION OPPORTUNITY

In 2008, St James' took a big risk in re-ordering the church building. This wasn't done for its own sake, but for the sake of God's Kingdom and a desire to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. That risk, taken prayerfully, faithfully, and at a cost, has had a significant impact upon the life of St James' over the last decade. St James' bucks the national trend; we are a growing, vibrant, active, multi-generational church. However, for these same reasons, we now find that our work, both in the church building and in the community, has outgrown and is being limited by the buildings we have. We now need more space for activities, space that is useable, flexible and easily accessible.

A once-in-a-generation opportunity has come St James' way that will enable us to build significantly on our vision to see lives in Devizes transformed by Jesus Christ and to further support our community.

St James' is a church wanting to love God, love our neighbour, and to go out and make disciples. As a consequence, we want to be more deeply involved in our community; to meet people with the Good News of Jesus Christ in ways that meet the needs of heart, soul and mind; and in doing so make the Christian faith accessible and relevant so all can know God's love and grow to trust in His son.

This is the opportunity that has been set before us: for St James' to serve our community by developing a vibrant Community Hub in the old youth centre (part of St James' old school site), which is directly opposite the church. The building is a two storey stone Victorian school in generally sound condition with large rooms well suited to our purpose and with easy pedestrian access to St James. (More details are found in the PKA Architects Project Plans).

A Community Hub would enable St James' to continue in the direction we are already travelling, the direction we believe God is calling us in.

SO WHAT DOES A HUB PROVIDE?

St James' Community Hub would provide rooms and facilities for community agencies and organisations who enable our communities to flourish, and be a venue for the many activities of St James'. St James' would be providing a multi-agency hub that actively serves and meets the needs of the community.

Not only does a hub provide us with a new multi-room venue, it also enables us to get more from our church building.

We would re-locate the church office to the hub to provide a larger office space needed for our staff team. (By employing CCTV the church will remain open to the public during the day.)

Running our outreach and community courses and activities, along with locating our church office in the hub, would give us the privilege of supporting and building relationships with other organisations, agencies and their clients.

In addition, relocating activities from the church to the hub means that the church will be more available to the community as a sacred space.

The vacated church office would be used for much-needed storage; whilst replacing the heavy upholstered chairs (which are now due for replacement) with lighter stackable chairs would transform the church into a more flexible worship space; opening the church up to a far wider range of uses. Hosting social and community evenings, café style church services, etc., would benefit from having an accessible store of café tables along with the lighter stackable chairs.

The hub would also provide a variety of rooms for our children's, youth and adult ministries. As much of the use of the hub by community organisations will be during working hours, the hub will be available for use by St James' to deliver our evening and weekend activities. Furthermore, parking at the hub would be available to the church during evenings and weekends.

As the hub is close to the church, the life and activity of the hub would be recognisably part of the mission of St James'.

Possible Church Uses:
CAP Money Course
CAP Life Skills Course
Taste-Life (Eating Disorders) Course
Children's and Youth Groups
Possible External Uses:
Foodbank distribution point
Devizes Area Health & Wellbeing Group
Vulnerable Children & Adult Groups
Family Support Groups
1-2-1 Client & Support Agencies

WHAT ABOUT THE PARISH CENTRE & ESTCOURT ROOM

The Parish Centre was built by St James' church members in the 1970's and is situated behind Southbroom House (the old vicarage). The centre is essentially isolated from the church. It does not provide easy storage or parking for the church. Its flat roof routinely requires maintenance. Currently, the centre pays its way, with regular hirers such as craft and dance groups. The centre is used by the church infrequently and not for missional purposes. Though it has in the past played a very significant role in the mission and ministry of St James', this is no longer the case.

The proposal is to develop the Community Hub, and in the future review the role of the Parish Centre in light of the outreach being delivered through the Community Hub.

The Estcourt Room would return to the Diocese Board of Education, who would seek to sell it for residential use.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT BUILDINGS

This is not primarily about buildings; it's about loving God with everything we've got and all that we are, and going out and sharing the love that we have found in Jesus with those in our community. And if we deviate from this, we will have failed to follow God's will for the mission of St James'.

This opportunity is more about serving our community and seeing individuals, families and groups flourish than it is about owning a building. The Community Hub simply enables us to do this. As does our Family Discipleship & Outreach Leader, Rob Jackson. In the year he has been with us Rob has shown us how to love both our church family and our local community in tangible, meaningful ways that help all to flourish. With the church office in the hub, Rob would be working right at the centre of our community engagement. Therefore, we will take this opportunity to also raise funds to secure the outreach lead Rob has provided St James'.

THE COST & HOW WE WILL MEET IT

As with all aspects of our discipleship there is no such thing as a free ride, and for the Community Hub to become a reality we will each have our part to play.

The old youth centre is currently owned by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), who, though part of the Diocese of Salisbury, are a separate charity responsible for funding the church schools in the diocese, including two in our parish, Southbroom and Trinity. We will need to buy the

building from the DBE, refurbishing it (details of the proposed refurbishments are found in the PKA Project Plans), as well as replacing the chairs and buying tables for the church.

The cost of the project falls into three parts. To purchase and refurbish the hub will cost around £230,000, including installation of a lift. Secondly, to replace the chairs in the church with lighter chairs will cost around £20,000. In addition to these capital costs, we need to increase our annual regular giving to the church by £25,000 to pay for the salary of Rob, who would be based in the hub. St James' can provide £70k from existing funds towards the capital costs, but this still means that we need to find an additional £180,000 by donations, grants and fundraising, and seek an increase in regular giving of £25,000 per annum .

Interest free loans would be helpful to ease cash flow for the capital costs, but loans do need to be repaid.

GET INVOLVED

Today I have shared this opportunity with our church family. Today it is just that, an opportunity. The PCC have prayed about, discussed, considered, got excited about, and can see God's hand in this opportunity. We have caught what we believe is God's vision for a Community Hub and how it might be used to further His Kingdom. Now we look to you to get involved; to pray about, discuss, question, consider, and hopefully get excited about and catch the vision. I am excited to hear what opportunities you can foresee the hub providing our community and the building of God's Kingdom. My experience has been that such opportunities as this one always release the creativity, energy and talents of God's people.

After today's service we will share this opportunity with the wider community. We will invite them to share how they feel the hub could be used to benefit our community and the part they may want to play in its future. We then have a choice to make both as individuals and as a church family; is the Community Hub what we believe God is calling us to do to build His Kingdom and to serve our community - and are you committed to supporting this vision? I, and the PCC, believe it is what God is calling us to do. Jesus has always called his followers to take risks for the Kingdom, to get involved in the work he is doing, and to take the Good News of his love out into the neighbourhood.

The prayer below is provided to guide us as we seek God's will at this time.

Lord

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to direct and sustain the mission and ministry of St James'.

Help us to remember that it is your mission and your ministry that you call us to participate in.

In this we pray that you are always our inspiration.

Help us to love those you place around us, especially those most vulnerable in our neighbourhoods, with a Christ-like love.

In this we pray that you are always our inspiration.

Help us as individuals and a church family to know your purposes for the Community Hub and to do your will.

In this we pray that you are always our inspiration.

Amen