

St Mark's Community Hub Project

Newsletter February 2025

It has been a while since our last newsletter, but it does not mean that things behind the scenes have not been happening, so we thought it was time to give you an update and ask for your prayers and help to achieve the next stage of the project.

Planning Permission from the council was SUCCESSFUL

Listed Building Consent was SUCCESSFUL

Diocese Application for approval of the works has been submitted but we are still awaiting formal approval. We have received a positive informal response and a meeting is being held on the 28th February which will hopefully give us a positive outcome so please continue to pray for this.

A grant application has been submitted by Sarah Griffiths to the National Lottery which could pay out up to half of the money required for the designed works... **BUT** research has found that large grants are more difficult to obtain in the current climate. It is unlikely that we will receive all of the money requested. Financing the full scheme so we can begin works on site is stalling the process. Whilst we pray for a successful outcome from this application Hennie and the project team have relooked at the phasing of the project to enable a start to be made.

With the St Marks Preschool moving out of the hall, works can commence on the refurbishment of this space as we already have the majority of the finances required for these works to be undertaken.



PHASE A

1. NEW ENTRANCE DOOR AND GLAZING TO HALL
2. NEW TOILETS AND KITCHENETTE. FORM HATCH INTO HALL FROM KITCHENETTE
3. NEW WALL AND DOUBLE DOORS BETWEEN HALL, CORRIDOR AND NEW MEETING ROOM
4. INCLUDE NEW EMERGENCY EXIT
5. NEW INSULATION AND SOUND PROOFING TO HALL CEILING AND WALLS AND NEW ELECTRIC HEATING
6. NEW MOVEABLE SOUNDPROOF PARTITIONS BETWEEN COLUMNS TO FORM NEW ROOM
7. NEW LOCKERS/STORAGE IN COORIDOR FOR MISSIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH AND GROUPS USING THE CHURCH FACILITIES THIS WILL ALLOW UPSTAIRS STORE ROOM TO BECOME A MEETING ROOM

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We are often asked about WHY we are proposing to do certain things therefore here are our thoughts on the need and benefits of the works to the hall.

THE NEED

The hall is a 1960's construction. The windows leak, there is no insulation to the walls and the space is very uneconomical to heat. In winter activities have to be cancelled in very cold weather. The hall has poor acoustic properties resulting in a noisy space where conversations are difficult. Apart from the accessible toilet the other toilets are specifically designed for children and therefore are not suitable for adults. The timber fascia and soffit boards external to the building are rotten and need replacing. This is a space that is used by approximately 20 community groups and the accommodation provided is not up to current standards.

THE BENEFITS

The addition of wall insulation, a lower insulated ceiling and the replacement of the windows will significantly reduce heat loss and greatly improve the efficiency of the heating system. A more sustainable electric heating system is proposed to be installed to replace the old gas boiler system. The lower insulated ceiling and the addition of acoustic wall panels will significantly improve the acoustics of the space.

The addition of a separate meeting room will be beneficial for small groups both for the church and the community and will allow activities to occur at the same time in the hall and the meeting room therefore increasing the number of groups who use the hall.

The change to adult toilets and the addition of a small brew station will allow the hall to be used independently of the rest of the building.

The upgrading of the elevation will result in the activities within the hall being much more evident from the adjacent St Mark's Road and will create a visual link between the local community and the church. A new accessible entrance will benefit those who have specific needs.

Sarah Griffiths and Mike Johnson are working on applying for smaller grants up to £15,000 to help towards this work which are aimed at projects that provide community use. The applications are nearly ready for submission to a number of organisations so your prayers for these are needed.

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KITCHEN UPGRADE

There is also a project underway to upgrade the existing kitchen space.

It is still early days, and Chris Hill is working with commercial kitchen suppliers on the design to ensure we maximise the space we have but also enable us to reuse the equipment when the final scheme is constructed.

THE NEED

The current kitchen layout has been in place since the 1980s when this area of the Hall was remodelled.

The kitchen was laid out using domestic base units, cupboards and sinks, together with a commercial cooking range and Bain Marie. The two sinks were replaced by the 2-bowl catering sink in the 1990s, together with a commercial dishwasher and re-flooring with non-slip vinyl.

The size, layout and age of the current kitchen means that it is not fit for purpose and can only be used for the link or the hall at separate times.

THE BENEFITS

There are two designs being currently reviewed utilising the existing space but using freestanding commercial grade equipment that can then be reused when the larger kitchen space is developed into the adjacent corridor.

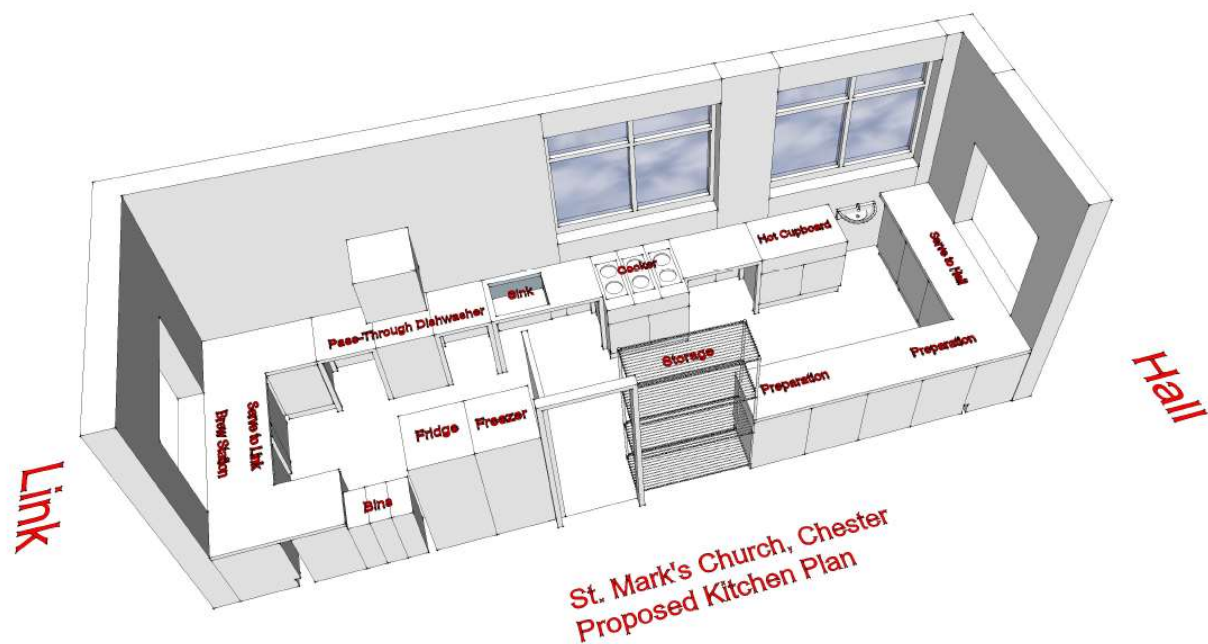
A better layout will allow larger events to be catered for more easily including the Easter and Harvest Breakfasts and events such as the successful Burns Night meal, but also to enable the hall to be rented out for larger events such as funerals or weddings.

To allow both the link and the hall to utilise the kitchen space for larger events at the same time the incorporation of a brew station is being reviewed when looking at the design of the new kitchen units.

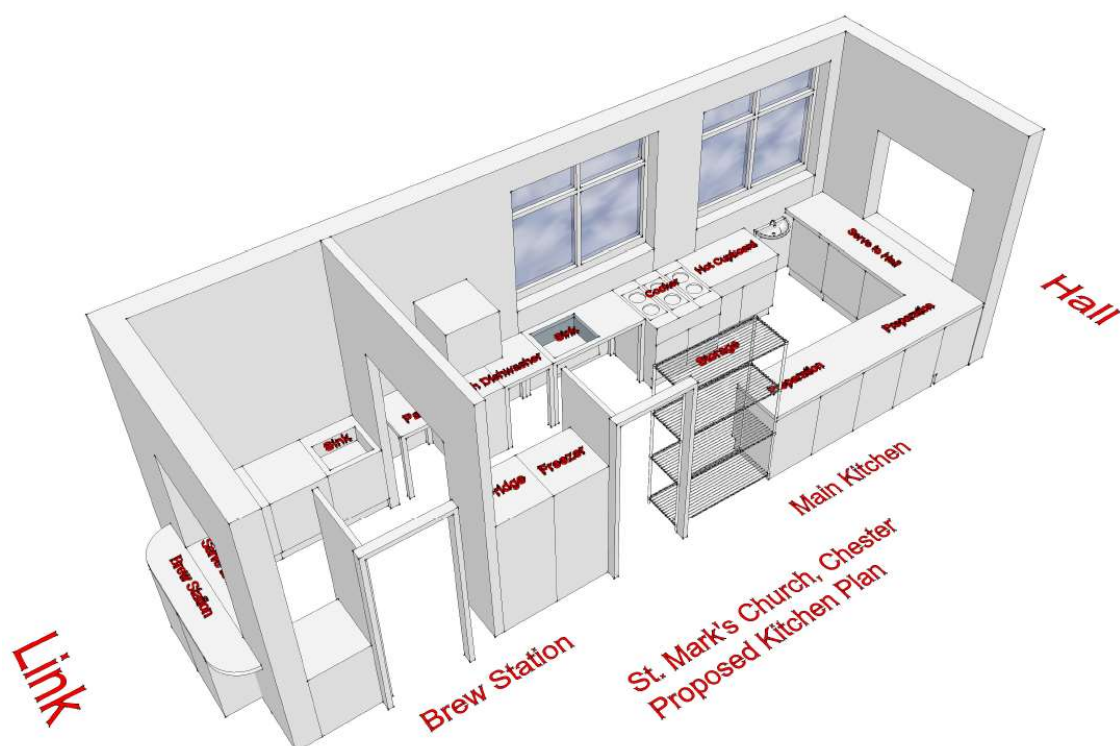
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OPTION 1 – USING THE FULL KITCHEN SPACE



OPTION 2 – REDUCED KITCHEN SPACE WITH ADDITIONAL BREW STATION WHICH CAN BE CLOSED OFF.



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AND FINALLY..... THE LINK BUILDING REVAMP

A project to spruce up the link building is also proposed, this will include incorporation of better freestanding storage which can be reused in the final scheme, painting of the walls and ceiling to give a fresher brighter feel and the purchase of new modern comfy furniture and new practical flooring.

A programme and scope of works is currently being drawn up but we hope that the work to the link can be achieved during the summer.



Whilst most of the works in the hall and kitchen will be undertaken by professional contractors we would like the works to the link building to be undertaken by local trades people and the church family where possible.

There is still a plan to undertake the works indicated in the designed scheme but until the finances are in place to do this we need to make the link building feel more inviting and a space that the church family and our community wants to be in and enjoy.

**WE PRAY FOR HELPERS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS AND
DRIVE THESE PROJECTS FORWARD**

Finally we wanted to say a big thank you also to those who have already given up time to support this project, whether through working on the current plans, applying for grants or supporting one of the events to raise money for this.

We hope to continue the momentum into 2025 and see works on the project begin.