



The Parish of  
**St George the Martyr**  
Shirley

## PROJECT UPDATE

Number 1  
March 2021

✧ *Following Christ* ✧ *Serving Community* ✧ *Welcoming All* ✧



*Digging foundations for the new church in 1952 with the original church in the background*

You may remember that a couple of years ago we raised the prospect that the building which was first erected around the time of the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War as the first temporary church, may be coming to the end of

its economic life. It has also served the community well as the church hall for almost 70 years since the opening of the more permanent church.

While cutting edge at the time, the wooden construction, use of asbestos and lack of double glazing and insulation make it inefficient to run and difficult to upgrade to today's more rigorous building regulations.



*The new church under construction in 1952*

We want to provide users with the following modern facilities:

- *better access for people of all abilities*
- *a commercial-standard kitchen*
- *accessible toilets and baby-change facilities*

The PCC therefore came to the conclusion that the responsible thing to do was to investigate ways of providing new facilities to meet the current and future needs of the church and the wider community.

Like PCCs of the past we have looked at various ways of funding this new-build project and are looking to a combination of the following:



*New hall at Emmanuel South Croydon*

- *Fundraising in the church and local community*
- *Grant applications to various sympathetic funders*
- *Capital from the sale last year of Church Cottage*
- *Sale of some underused land at the rear of the site*
- *Partnership with the Diocese over use of the Vicarage site*

Given the Covid Pandemic, much of the discussion of this at PCC and with the Diocese has been online rather than face-to-face but this has not delayed things and we are now ready to enter the next significant phase.



**The Diocese of  
Southwark**

At a cost to be shared with the Diocese, we will shortly begin a topographical survey of the site which will (literally) tell us the lie of the land.

In order to do this most effectively, and to make the site as flexible for development as possible, some trees to the rear of the site – most of them on Vicarage land and including a diseased oak which is deemed unsafe – will be removed. No doubt the loss of the two fir trees between the hall and the church will have the biggest visual impact but their root balls make it impossible to build round them and, with a heavy heart, the PCC have agreed that they must go.

This may at first sight seem to be at odds with the objectives of our Eco Group but we have to take account of the whole environmental impact of the project in reducing our carbon footprint.



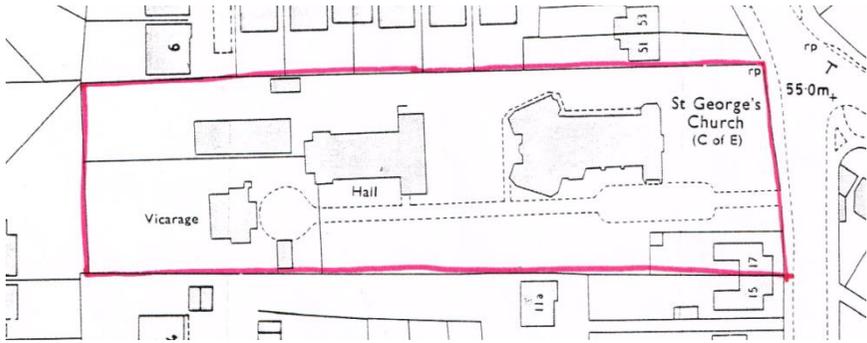
### *New hall at St. John's Beckenham*

The new hall will be built to the latest standards and take advantage of the cutting-edge technologies of today and the green revolution of the future. The Eco Group will also ensure that the PCC stick to their commitments to:

- *replace the trees that are lost with new planting in sympathy with and enhancing the environment*
- *maintain an outdoor space to be safely enjoyed by all, with better segregation of pedestrians and vehicles*
- *ensure that biodiversity is maintained and encouraged*



*Our solar panels have reduced our carbon emissions by the same amount as planting over 338 trees in 5 years*



At present the future layout of the site is extremely sketchy until we have the results of the topographical survey which will then allow the architects, who will be appointed jointly by the Diocese and the PCC, to bring forward more detailed proposals for further consultation.

This is an exciting development and one which I know has been raised and explored by previous incumbents. I trust that the short-term disruption and inconvenience and possible sense of loss will be worth it when we celebrate together the opening of new facilities that will support the work of future generations of Christians here in Shirley just as our forebears did in 1937 and in 1952.

We hope you will give this project your prayerful consideration and ultimately your blessing and backing.



**Revd Barry Hengist**  
Incumbent



**Jan Payne**  
Churchwarden



**Alexander Baldwin-Smith**  
Churchwarden