



Church Interior Development Committee

(CIDC): Update 1

RESOLUTION As many people will know, at its meeting on 18 November 2015 the PCC passed a resolution including the following: *“to replace the pews with chairs”....and to “appoint a sub-committee..... to obtain the necessary diocesan approval and undertake essential research into associated alterations”.* *“As part of the process it will arrange a church meeting for the matter to be discussed”...“Specific funding is to be raised for the replacement of the pews by chairs and associated flooring changes. Any such funds to be restricted for the replacement of the pews and the flooring”*

SUB-COMMITTEE The sub-committee has been appointed and comprises: **Ed Boyden (Chair); Bimbi Abayomi-Cole; Mark Lynds; Nici Platt; Stephen Russell-Smith; Mark Sanger.** We had our first meeting on 3 February. We plan to bring you regular progress reports and this is our first update.

YOUR VIEWS Whilst the decision to replace the pews has already been made by the PCC, we know this is an issue about which some people feel strongly. We are approaching this process with care and sensitivity and we do want to hear your views and opinions. Please feel free to speak to any of the people mentioned above, or you can email us at the dedicated email address set up for this purpose which is cidc@stpaulscrofton.co.uk We will also be arranging a church meeting in due course and we plan to set up a separate section on the church website where relevant information and documents will be posted; paper copies will also be freely available for those who prefer this.

PROCESS As well as listening to church members, including taking account of views already expressed in writing, we plan to take advice from the Diocese and from other churches who have taken this path, to learn from their experience and to avoid mistakes that they may have made along the way. Members of the team will visit other churches and report back.

In due course we plan to obtain a range of alternative chairs for us all to try out, (although we know that comfort is a personal thing and we don't expect to find an option that pleases everyone!) We will be asking for your feedback on these and other issues as the project progresses. In due course we will submit the necessary application to the Diocese.

FLEXIBILITY Finally, a word about why this is happening. Historically the local church building has been a flexible and welcoming space at the centre of the community, a place that can accommodate not only formal worship services on a Sunday but other meetings, large and small, sacred and secular throughout the week.

The background to the decision by the PCC in November was our heightened focus on mission to the local community as well as awareness of our need to prepare the building for the long-term in terms of flexibility of use, flexibility of worship, outreach activities and greater community interaction in the future.

Many local churches have already made this change and they are seeing new people coming in, discovering new uses for their buildings and finding more opportunities to serve their local parishes. We pray that this will be true for St Paul's too.