

Process and brief

Prepared by Robert Cotton, 24/11/11

GMC Guildford Methodist Church

MHC Michael House Cambridge (an 11th century church right in the centre of Cambridge; disused for worship, used as a church hall for Great St Mary's; redesigned as a café, exhibition space, and brought back into use for occasional services)

SM St Mary's Guildford

HTSM Holy Trinity and St Mary's Guildford

Process

Since summer 2011,

1. GMC and SM have continued to share main Sunday services with Brian Roberts preaching at GMC in September, and Jane Vlach leading worship at SM (with significant GMC input) in October. All such worship is being well received; people want this to continue.
2. Robert Cotton met with leaders from St Saviour's, St Nicolas' and the Town Centre Chaplaincy to brief them about continuing discussions. They too are very positive and urge us to continue this process.
3. Ministers and lay leaders from GMC and SM continue to meet about every 6 weeks to steer and guide this process.
4. Other plans for helping our congregations to know each other (as described in *Your people shall be my people*) continue.
5. 2 visits to see MHC were arranged in October and November with about 8 people from each congregation visiting to see if MHC might be a model for our work in Guildford.

Conclusion from point 5:

- Key differences: MHC is much larger; footfall passing its door is much higher than for SM; MHC was not active as a church with Sunday services when their re-development happened
- The option of handing SM over to a company to run a venture such as MHC is not recommended (as we would lose control of the space too much – for both midweek and Sunday services/events; it was felt unlikely to work as a profitable business)
- Recommendation: devise a model for SM that makes it an attractive venue for a range of purposes within which a small simple part-time café could be run – the purposes to include exhibition and concert space, display areas to promote the Christina history and message, use by other town based charities for meetings, lectures and support for (for example, Street Angels and Town Centre Chaplaincy)

Therefore,

1. Support is sought from the PCC of HTSM and appropriate GMC authorities, to employ an architect to receive a brief early in January 2012, and bring back outline proposals in early February.
2. from the point of view of HTSM, the PCC is asked to endorse the brief outlined below, and to encourage the various congregations within the parish to comment on the brief; people will be alerted to the following meeting in February to receive the architect's outline response. This brief supplements the paper *St Mary's Church: a Sanctuary in the heart of Guildford*.

Brief

To provide drawings and a range of options that fulfil the vision in the Sanctuary paper and take into account these further details.

A key aspect of this is the breaking down of barriers between the secular and the sacred, thereby creating a Christian environment that is welcoming and accessible to the townspeople of Guildford.

Within the footprint of SM as it stands, and honouring the historic fabric, to provide

1. an area for worship that is suitable for congregations of 20, 50 and 120 people on Sundays, for weddings and funerals; to consider the re-positioning of the west end space so that the worship area is longer and more focussed on the east end
2. enlarge vestry to provide sufficient space for GMC and SM requirements for worship
3. kitchen and server suitable for running a small café (approx 30 seats) that could provide light lunches and hot drinks
4. method to display permanent and temporary exhibitions, whether on the walls or in the centre of the church
5. at least 2 rooms for office and meeting space of a size to be useful, say, for Town Centre Chaplaincy
6. disabled toilet and 1 other toilet
7. review the heating, lighting, and sound systems, and consider how to provide projection and screens suitable for worship
8. consider storage needs, and whether the roof space can be brought into use
9. consider whether solar panels and other renewable technologies can be brought into use

In churchyard

1. make north door the main entrance (accessible from outside)
2. re-lay path and approach suitable for a smooth entrance
3. re-configure gate to increase prominence and presence of SM, with attractive, seasonal and emergency lighting, and enhanced signage
4. consider enlarging flat area outside porch (possibly cutting into bank on east of current path), with outdoor seating