

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION AT PCC ON 15 APRIL 2021 REGARDING FUNDING OPTIONS FOR THE BUILDING PROJECT

Claire Smith presented the range of funding streams available to churches wishing to reorder. These are split into larger and smaller grants. The largest funder is the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

PCC discussed whether, as a matter of principle, we wished to pursue Lottery Funding and considered a paper on this from Stewardship and one from AI with a theological perspective.

Each member gave their thoughts based on the information provided and their own sense of what was right in all the circumstances. The overall consensus was that:

1. We have a sense of God's call to action on this project **now** and we have already invested in employing Claire to take things forward. If we are to proceed with a Lottery application it needs to be now rather than later in the process.
2. The amount needed to repair the church building to make it fit for purpose is huge and has fallen on our watch. It is an old building and we are obliged to try and maintain it without any funding support from central church or government funds (except through the Heritage Lottery scheme). The Heritage Lottery Fund exists to fund the 'heritage' side of the project, rather than the ministry and mission of the church. This is a system which has emerged in the 21st century and is generally seen as acceptable by churches due to the continuing deterioration of buildings and the lack of other funding.
3. We do not relish the prospect of lottery funding as the National Lottery is a form of gambling, however we see this in the context of how other funding streams are likely to come from sources that are not "pure" and may involve investment in things that we would not condone.
4. We did not like the fact that the Lottery can be seen as a "tax on the poor" but felt that our project would at least ultimately be for the benefit of our parish where there is a lot of poverty as opposed to a project for the benefit of a more elite demographic.
5. We were concerned about requirements to advertise the Lottery funding on our building. Claire explained that this is required but can be achieved discreetly.
6. We need to have faith that God can provide what we need for this project if it is in accordance with His will – Lottery funding will only, if we are successful, cover part of what we will need to raise. Much faith (and hard work) is still required!

The decision to proceed with a Lottery funding application was approved, with nine votes in favour and two abstentions. The PCC acknowledges and respects the dissenting view that remained unconvinced by this course of action.

For all of this, let us continue to pray for God's provision for this project, for his glory. We should still be very open to the sort of extraordinary and surprising gifts and donations we have experienced before at St Thomas'!