

Building Transformation Project Public Consultation Feedback February 2020

Total responses 27

Age range: under 18 [1], 18 - 50 [3], 50+ [23]

Do you live in the City of Ely? Yes = 19 No = 8

1 Have you attended services or functions in St. Mary's Church (not Hall)?

Yes = 24 No = 2 1 not recently

If Yes - which of these?

Church Service [21]

Concert/Talk/Book Event [14]

Other - Weddings/funerals/baptisms 4 + Heritage weekend - 1 and supper – 1

2 Do you like the changes we are proposing?

Yes = 21 No = 4 2 = mostly'

Comments :

- How can it be done and keep hall open?
- Like trad layout - balcony glass would make me dizzy
- Good use of space/extra rooms (x2) - mixed feelings about store room in chancel
- Like muted colour scheme
- Buildings needs to have more flexible use (x2)
- Good for community
- Very sensible to level floor, disabled access and replace pews with chairs
- Losing the carpets would be a shame
- Absolutely brilliant – needs opening up for the community
- Will make the space more welcoming and comfortable for all
- Make church more 'useable'
- Change seems too much – the interior looks cold, characterless, empty
- Am a traditionalist, but recognise you need to make changes and applaud bold vision, even though it would not, for me personally, engender a recognition of the holy in a sacred space. Sorry!
- Don't like modern chairs – put in more pews
- Where will banners and flower arranging stuff be stored? Where does prayer corner go? Will there be kitchen in main church as well as hall?
- Looks good on screen – many aspects much needed.
- Would like more of the old pews incorporated

3 Do you think the changes will enable more use of the church building by local organisations and the wider community?

Yes = 26 No = 0 Possibly = 1

Comments:

- Maybe there are other places in the community that could be used?
- Where is the sacredness, the majesty, the glory? Appreciate the need for functionality but at what cost?
- Fabric is only part of enabling wider use – janitorial and hosting people also required
- Beautiful space that should be appreciated by locals and visitors
- Are you planning on charging for use by groups? How will this be addressed? Charging for ‘middle class’ type use (eg Toppings, book clubs, ladies groups) could then subsidise free use for vulnerable groups. Need a lot more publicity by the roadside to help people understand that the space is open to them. Currently the image of St Mary’s is quite restricted to ‘religious activities’. Trying to be positive, not critical – I think what you are proposing is brilliant.
- All churches should be open to all, all the time. Hope these changes will spread a wider message.
- Flexible use of space to be applauded
- I’m sure these changes will enable more community use (x2)
- Maybe adopt the Cathedral model – open each day with team of volunteers
- Concern about mixed use of ringing chamber - could create friction?
- Will need a full time caretaker and cleaner to keep the glass clean. Also, what about licencing laws? Parking facilities are very limited and difficult in the centre of Ely.

4 What community events/activities would you like to see take place in the church?

- Plays, concerts, social gatherings
- Promote more church weddings with attraction of hosting a reception. Use gallery for bellringing meetings.
- Maybe a social dance monthly
- Shared services with other churches, community Pentecost/harvest celebrations including dance and music
- Hospitality to many other groups in Ely and surrounding villages/team churches
- Anything to bring people together in community (x2)
- As many as you can physically cope with
- Someone to talk to would be useful – perhaps a permanent café during the week. Spaces to hire/use for ??? ventures
- Book clubs, safe place for homeless/vulnerable people, homework clubs, safe place for vulnerable children
- General community functions
- U3A small and central meetings
- Er – worship!! (Rather than simply secular activities) Thank you for making time for such a consultation as this. I wish you every success with your project and fundraising and will be interested to see the finished results and hope that they will result in, if nothing else, an uncluttered and ‘clean’ church. Good luck!
- Just religious, campanology, and maybe some educational programmes
- Inviting other groups and businesses to use the space may make the church more inviting to those who wouldn’t normally enter a church. It’s great if the space can be used for all ages and people with differing needs. For me, it’s nice if space is made within the seating arrangement for children to easily sit with parents during the service. Space for pram for a sleeping baby to be close to parent and signs to know where to put buggys out of the way for busy services. A church I visited had some chairs with small tables at the back of church which were used by children and some more senior church members during the service so there was somewhere to place colouring books/hymn and service books.