

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE ROCK TEAM – JANUARY 2021



Elevation B
Scale: 1:1000



Elevation D
Scale: 1:1000

NOT ONE BUT TWO PIECES OF GOOD NEWS FOR ROCK

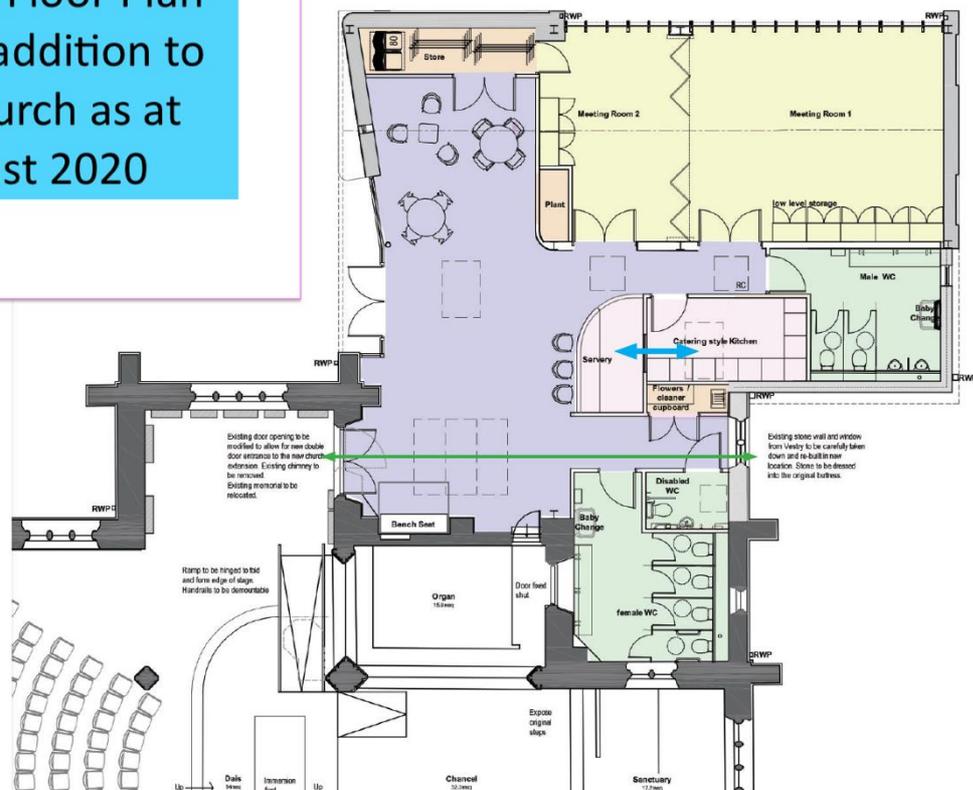
The First Good News – Planning Permission Received

2021 started with the very welcome and long-awaited news that B&NES Council has given us planning permission for the external elements of the ROCK Project. For the ROCK Team this has been a great challenge to their perseverance and forbearance – both of which have been tested to the full. As a result of 17 months of discussions with Council officers, some changes have been made to our plans. However the core of the plans, which is a new entrance with new accommodation on the car park side of the church, remains as it was.

FLOOR PLAN OF ADDITION TO CHURCH SHOWING

- New doorways
- New kitchen
- Separate Male and Female Toilets
- Meeting room (can be divided)
- Gathering area/foyer
- Storage
- Plant (controls)

Current Floor Plan
for the addition to
the church as at
August 2020



As with most planning approvals, there are a number of conditions attached; in our case there are around 30 conditions. Some of those are routine e.g. archaeological work must be carried out in an approved way; some relate to further matters of design e.g. submitting revised proposals for external lighting; another one requires us to have extended the car park before work can begin.

All of the conditions were notified to us in advance and agreed by your ROCK team, so there are no surprises. You can see the approval letter and the schedule of conditions on the church website on the ROCK section.

The planning approval does not cover any internal changes to the church as approval for these changes rests with the Diocese.

The Second Good News – Generous Gift Received for the ROCK Project

The second piece of good news is that at the end of 2020, the church received the generous gift of £100,000 from a couple (not yet retired) who are longstanding members of All Saints. That gift has increased to £125,000 now that the Gift Aid has been reclaimed on it. In explaining what motivated this couple to make this donation, the couple wrote:

'We are really pleased to be able to respond personally in this way to God's call for the ROCK Project. When we were thinking about how we might contribute to raising funds for the programme, we were initially thinking in much smaller terms of money. We had imagined fund raising or sponsorship, perhaps raising a few £100s.

However, God kept prompting us to think bigger. If we wanted to secure the church building for future generations then we were going to have to step-up to the plate. We thought maybe £1000, but that was not the right amount, we went up by x10 and still that did not seem right either. We didn't have the money or vision to think bigger but it was only at £100k that we felt we had reached the right target. We reflected that if we were doing financial planning for our children or family we would be considering all of our resources, including our home and material possessions, so why would we exclude those things from our thinking for the future of our church family.

This new way of thinking gave us the heart to joyously consider what we could sell to raise the money for the £100k gift. Despite the planning permission not being in place, we would have to rely on God to see the fulfilment of the remaining steps of His vision for ROCK - we were just glad to be able to play a part in response to God's challenge to think bigger!

1. We have to obtain planning permission from the Diocese for both the external and internal changes we propose to make. Obtaining approval for the external changes should help with the Diocese decision but we have more work to do on specifying the details of any internal changes.
2. The plans are not yet at the level of detail that is necessary for building work to start. Because planning permission is so crucial, the ROCK Team has held off pushing on with detailed design work, which, of course, means more expenditure. Roughly, around 6-9 months of detailed design work is required before we can appoint contractors. Some of those details (as noted above) have to be signed off by the Council and may also need sign off from the Diocese.
3. Although we have all the funds necessary to get ready for construction to begin, we still need to raise sufficient funds to be able to start building work. The construction and fitting out of the building will cost well over £2million. During 2021 we will be making approaches to external trusts and donors to raise some of that money, and at some point, the intention is to come back to the church for a second appeal – five years after the first one.

We are now into our ninth year of ROCK activity! Of course, progress has not been as fast as some would have liked but we have kept going patiently, prayerfully, and hopefully. All eleven members of the ROCK Team want us to carry on step-by-step.

In January 2021, the PCC will meet twice to decide how far and how fast to proceed from here. The ROCK Team has recommended to the PCC that we move to the next stage of working up the design, so that we will be ready go out to tender when the funds are there to enable construction to proceed. The PCC will also be asked to support action to raise the necessary funds from within the church family and beyond.

But What About Covid?

Well may you ask! When we started 8+ years ago (or even a year ago) no one could have imagined a Covid pandemic. We and many other churches have learned how to do church differently and this has brought many unexpected blessings and benefits, as well as depriving us of the benefits of gathering together in one place. Some will argue that we should either cease the project altogether or wait until Covid is well and truly over, so we can know better what church and society looks like then. Having given this argument a good deal of thought over the past months, the ROCK Team remains convinced that we need to press on.

Covid has been a huge shock to the whole world. But it is almost certainly a temporary shock compared with the past 2,000 years during which times the church has faced many greater shocks than this. What we are doing as a church with our project is not just seeking to 'survive', but to create a people-church and a building-church which will be a light on a hill for many years – indeed many decades to come.

Oh, and not forgetting the Car Park

You will have spotted earlier that one of the conditions of the planning permission is that we have to make good our proposal to extend the on-site car parking. During 2020, we had discussions with the Guinness Partnership which maintains the sheltered housing between Church St and Lynfield Park and which also owns the green triangle of land at the end of the car park. A price has been agreed for the land and solicitors are currently engaged to bring this sale to a completion. A plan for the enlargement of the car park will then need to be approved by the council. There is no reason why this mini-project could not be completed by the end of this year. When it is finished, the car park should have space for 34 cars (currently there is space for 22).

And Finally...

As always continue to remember this work, the ROCK Team and the PCC in your prayers. The ROCK Team are always happy to listen to ideas and comments and will always answer any questions you may have. Don't forget there is a wealth of plans and documentation on the church website and frequently asked questions and answers booklets.

BEFORE



AFTER.....

