

# **HELP SAVE OUR CHURCH!**

## **St Nicholas' Church, Baydon has reached crisis point**

### **Update following the open meeting**

At an open meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> December, around fifty people crammed into the church – at least, into the parts not still shrouded in tarpaulins, shielding the area from which lead has been stolen!

Canon Simon Weeden, Rector of the Whitton Team, outlined the current situation with the building. The replacement of the lead will mostly be covered by insurance; however, the cracks in the East wall are widening to the point of urgency because of potential danger, there are problems with the vestry and the South wall, and other areas of the roof and the interior will need attention soon. Initial estimates are that simply making the building watertight and sound will cost between £100,000 and £200,000!

It is important to understand that there is no central funding for local church buildings – their care and maintenance rest firmly with the local community involved.

Simon outlined three options for a way ahead:

1. Simply to try to raise funds to deal with the problems outlined above (both locally and through grant applications), possibly by setting up a separate charity, the “Friends of St Nicholas, Baydon”;
2. To use this crisis as an opportunity to widen the use of the church building by the community – as would have been the case in the past. This would not be to set up in competition with existing facilities such as the BYPA Hall, but to complement them, by making the building more flexible, thereby offering better opportunities for the church to serve the local community by providing more than worship services. Wider “ownership” by the community would also radically broaden the range of grant funding available, taking some of the load off local people.
3. If neither of these options were feasible, the only alternative would be to close the church, and to worship elsewhere (say, the school hall). The result would be a huge loss of the village’s history, and of many local family stories, and no further provision available for funerals or weddings in the village. If the Church were closed, there would be a strong possibility that it could be demolished.

Simon made it very clear that this was not “project fear”, but “project reality”.

## **SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

At the meeting, there was clearly no appetite for Option 3.

Steering Groups are being set up to explore:

- what needs to be done,
- levels of urgency and importance – and thus the order in which things need to happen, and
- how the work might be financed.

Some volunteers have already come forward, both to serve on this group and to provide the various skills needed, in both the short and the longer terms.

Once the Steering Group has completed its initial research, another open meeting will be arranged, so please keep an eye out for all further information.

For more information, check the church website:

<http://whittonteam.org.uk/?p=19>

or Facebook page:

[stnicholaschurchinbaydon](#)

or contact:

Tina Evans (Churchwarden) – [tina.evans50@yahoo.com](mailto:tina.evans50@yahoo.com) or 540250

Donni Blackwell (Churchwarden) – [donniblackwell@icloud.com](mailto:donniblackwell@icloud.com)

Margaret Hill (Secretary) - [Church@baydon.org](mailto:Church@baydon.org)

If you are able to offer any kind of assistance, please contact any of the above.

Anyone kindly wishing to make a financial contribution should please send this to:

BACS transfers: Baydon LCC, sort code 09-01-54,  
account number 80637083

Online donations: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/9087>

Cheques made out to: Baydon LCC,  
sent to: Baydon LCC Treasurer, 7 Newton's Walk, Baydon