

Dear Parishioners,

I wish you continued blessings of the Risen Lord during these Easter days.

I am writing to notify you of a significant development regarding the "Growing in Faith" Project that was agreed several years ago by donors and the then parish priest, Fr. Peter Randall SJ. The agreed major project then was to redevelop the waste ground next to our church. There was a hope that the space might be used for the construction of useable space, and even the building of a parish hall was suggested.

It has become clear to me that the funds available were not adequate for such a project. The Jesuit Province has indicated that they cannot provide us with the necessary resources for a new hall. I plan to approach them soon with a request for a resolution to the issue of the waste ground, which represents an eyesore and a probable danger to health if entered (based on the results of recent hazardous substances testing).

My primary aim in this process since become the Parish Priest in September 2018 has been to identify a clearly achievable project, within the budget of the parish's portion of the Growing in Faith scheme, and which will bring considerable benefit to our parishioners.

When I arrived it became clear that the church lighting is very old and costly to run (using high wattage halogen lighting in most places), and that parts of it had been failing for quite a long time, with old out-of-date wiring and fittings. It had been the subject of frequent complaints for several years. In October of 2018 three of the main lights failed and the sanctuary was left in semi darkness. Knowing that a major concert was planned for the Remembrance Weekend, I was able to obtain services of engineers who had worked on the successful Farm Street Church project two years ago, and some effective new temporary lighting was installed.

Since then I asked Bruce Kirk at "Light Perceptions Ltd" to prepare a proper lighting design for St Ignatius Church, which has beautiful atmosphere, exquisite mosaics, and would certainly benefit from a unified, effective scheme. He has prepared a thorough brief, with excellent visuals, and is ready to go ahead with a detailed tendering document and application to the HCC for permission to carry out the work. Mr Kirk indicated to me that the budget would be "in the area of £100,000", and that, with approval, he could foresee the installation being carried out over the summer months.

The scheme/design is excellent: it will be effective, unified, infinitely variable; will provide excellent lighting for the congregation, many of whom sit in semi-darkness in the aisles; it will bring out the aesthetic beauty and details of the building, and will use the latest wiring and LED low-wattage equipment, thus being safer, longer-lasting, and saving a considerable amount of electricity, and so representing an obvious start towards implementation of one of our Jesuit apostolic preferences (caring for our common home). With continuing improvements in technology fittings will be easily replaced in the coming years.

Most attractive for me in the context of GiF is that it is an immediately identifiable need, and one which can be brought to a successful conclusion by the end of this year.

The parish finance committee finds this change of use of the funds to be very attractive and have unanimously agreed to the change. The Diocese has also agreed that this is a beneficial change. I will also be writing soon to inform all who donated to the Growing in Faith Programme. Please contact me at any time to discuss this matter in more detail. 02088002121 or stamfordhill@rcdow.org.uk

Fr Andrew Cameron-Mowat SJ