

Ecclesiastical Assembly

Changes to St. Ouën's Parish Church

Wednesday, 21st March 2018

Speakers:

Rev. I. Pallent

Mr. R. Le Breton (Surveillant)

Mr. J. Bell (Architect)

[00:00]

Rev. I. Pallent:

Good evening, everybody, and welcome to the Parish Church for this Ecclesiastical Assembly. As we begin, shall we pray together, and I thought we would pray together the Lord's Prayer and whether you are used to it in the traditional format or the modern format, and if you wish to join in then you are very welcome. So shall we pray? **[Lord's Prayer]** We will now read the Convening Notice.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

"An Assembly of Principals and Electors of the Parish of St. Ouen will be held on 21st March 2018 at 7.30 p.m. in the Parish Church to: 1. Approve, if deemed advisable, the Act of Assembly of 6th February 2018. 2. To receive a report and proposal from the Rector and Surveillants in relation to the proposed reordering of the Parish Church to create new toilets, provide onsite meeting rooms, create a new chapel in front of the altar and remove various pews in accordance with the details set out in the proposal document circulated to all Principals and Electors of the Parish on 3rd March 2018. 3. If deemed appropriate authorise Le Rectorat ou Bénédicte de la Paroisse de St. Ouen to do any and all things in relation to the reordering required to give effect to the proposals,

including seeking an appropriate Faculty from the Ecclesiastical Court and submitting a planning application to the States of the Jersey Planning Department each in relation to the detailed proposed reordering. 14th March 2018." You have all been given on the pews a copy of that Act of Assembly of 6th February 2018. Unless anybody has any objection, we would like to take that as read. I need a proposer for that and a seconder please. So it is proposed by Mrs. Caroline Le Breton and it is seconded by Mr. Brett Cutts. Thank you very much.

Rev. I. Pallent:

We are now going to move on. I am going to talk for a bit just outlining why we have brought these proposals to you tonight. Then there will be a presentation on the actual plans themselves for you to consider. Following that, there will be a speech by Richard Le Breton, the surveillant, talking a bit about the finances of the project. Then there will be an opportunity after that for comments and questions before we take a vote. Can I begin by saying thank you, on behalf of both myself and the church, and say how grateful we are that you have come along tonight to this Assembly to give your views? They are important. I mentioned the church as well because the purpose of tonight's Assembly is to hear the reasons why the church community here have put forward these proposals for this special building for future generations and then look at what those plans entail. At the outset I also want to acknowledge and recognise that for all of us this can be a difficult and challenging decision because in terms of the fabric of this special building it affects almost everything that we have always known. So from the outset, I am sorry if for some of you this causes a level of upset. Irrespective of whether you worship God and Jesus Christ here on a Sunday morning I know and appreciate how special this place is to you. It is special because we are blessed with a beautiful building. It is special because it is also packed with something else that is far more precious; the memories and emotions of some pivotal events in our lives in the distant past and some the more recent. It could have been the place where you got married or where you celebrated a child's birth or where you said goodbye to someone dear, or when you came in here on a Tuesday afternoon and sat quietly hoping to hear a whisper from God or to know that he was with you when you were facing a critical issue. This building is special and appreciated and valued. Church buildings have a unique role and are often connected with the most significant events in our lives. We have got to balance that on one side with the tension that also that they have to adapt because they should be places of life, community and Christian witness. They have to adapt to the world in which we live, which is what happened to this building in the great restoration of 1865, and on many occasions before that in the centuries before. The world in which we live today is changing more rapidly than at any point in history. Some of us may feel uncomfortable with what is going on. We may resist it. But it is the world we live in now. And not all change is for the worse. This is how some of those changes are played out practically, that we face as a church community here. As was evidenced in the recent BBC TV series, *A Vicar's Life* from Herefordshire. The default question from many of a younger generation when they come into buildings like this is no longer: "Is there a toilet?" but: "Where is the toilet?" A response of: "75 yards away by the car park" does not quite wash, as I can testify to when I have chatted with young mothers with children or you meet somebody with a disability. Another problem we face is

having to say to young parents: “We run our children’s and youth work three-quarters of a mile away most Sundays and then bus them to the building.” It is a barrier for all sorts of safeguarding and health and safety, not to mention cultural reasons to date. For some of you, you may say: “Well, we did it. It was good enough for us.” But that was then and today is different. It is a barrier we face to growing this community here and keeping it going. It is why many churches are asking, without sacrificing the core beliefs of Christianity, why do we exist as a church, which at its heart is a growth question. It is why many churches throughout this Island and the mainland are making changes to ancient buildings like this one as a result for the generations to come. Archbishop Justin Welby recently said in answering the “why do we exist” question.

[00:15]

First, the church exists to worship God and Jesus Christ. Second, the church exists to make new disciples of Jesus Christ. Everything else is decoration. Some of it may be very necessary, useful or wonderful but it is decoration. It is why 2 years ago or so now the church here invited one of the leading experts on church growth in the Church of England to visit us, to start to get us thinking. On that day a number of us hypothetically got on a bus together and started a journey. Through the months and years since through a prayerful planning process more of the church got on board with this journey. As I said earlier, it is not everyone but it is the most. We started to paint a picture of a future vision for this place for the glory of God, for the future generations to come. It is surely reasonable to propose that if over the centuries each generation has played its part in meeting the needs of its community we, in the 21st century, should be ready and prepared to do the same. So the picture we paint of the future tonight is a space for all under one roof. Have you ever stopped to ask why most church services in this Island and in the U.K. (United Kingdom), and around most of the western world, are between 9.30 and 11.30 on a Sunday morning? Historically it is to do with farming and the times when cows were milked. It is a tradition dating back to the mid to late-1800s, about the last time this Parish church was reordered. In those days most children in this Island on a Sunday morning were in a church building. Today the biggest grouping of children between 9.30 and 11.30 on a Sunday morning is not in the church but 3 miles away from here at the rugby club. Maybe your children or grandchildren go there, maybe you go there. Whether we like it or not the culture has changed. It is very difficult now to attract children to be part of church for many reasons. Some go to St. Bart(?). It is even more difficult when you do not have any onsite facilities for them. This Parish church is the only one in this Island without an adjacent church hall or church rooms or Parish Hall or school all next to it. It is even more challenging when you are surrounded by green zone as well. The days of busing children in is reaching an end. Churches should be full of children and many are not, which is why they are struggling in many, many churches all around the mainland and in some here. This is why the majority of the Parish church community have put forward these proposals tonight. But it is not just about Sunday. It is about an accessible church at the heart of the Parish. Over the centuries this building has been more than a place of worship. It was used during the week for community activities. Today that is not the case. Personally, I think this building should be used more during

the week. It should be a place and a hub for the community. For too many today, especially the younger generation, coming through the door of this building is a huge barrier. We live in an era when many of the younger generations are asking: what is the relevance of this place that we value so much? In 1865 when this present building was designed, if you like, the Rector and Church's role would have been a pastoral church caring for a Christian island. 150 years later the culture has changed to be a church of mission, to oppose Christian culture, saying as the great Billy Graham famously said so often: "Let me introduce you to Jesus Christ." This is not something that the church should fear but it is an opportunity to welcome and embrace and not to succumb further to the creeping sacred secular divide occurring in both our everyday thinking and living. This is why the majority of the Parish church community have put forward these proposals for changes to this building. Finally, it is also a picture of the future of cherishing the past and embracing the future. I want to show you a photograph. It is a photograph I found in Jersey Archive of the past. It is a photograph of this building before it was restored in 1865. When you look at this plan of this building I have a question: what changed in the great restoration of 1865? If you are not sure the question can be answered in one word, the word is "everything". Everything was taken out internally while the external porches were knocked down and barring the, if you like, outside walls and the arches and pillars this started again, including building a new porch that all of us came through tonight. There was not really much cherishing of the past. In fact, if you read the history books, so radical and new was this reordering of 1865 that the Parish church had to be reconsecrated as a church. That means it had to be rededicated by the Bishop. It is why the majority of the church community here believes the proposed plans are evolution not revolution. If, like me, you have been in every Parish church, District church or daughter church in this Island, not to mention any of the churches of other denominations, you will know that all the changes outlined have been carried out to some extent in Anglican churches in this Island over the past decade or so. We believe we are retaining the truly historic elements of this building. Everyone has a Parish church. It is what special about them, irrespective of whether we choose to use them or not. But this is no more my building or your building. This building is special. Yes, because of its physical beauty. Yes, because of the memories that it holds for us. But more because of someone more precious. It is God's house where his beautiful presence dwells. It is where the church gathers to worship God and Jesus Christ and to make new disciples of Jesus Christ, to go out and to try and live a better life in the world in which we live. That is why the vast majority of the church that gathers in this place believes in this vision, for this building. The choice to proceed further down that journey is in the hands of each one of you as parishioners. My hope and prayer is, as we consider this, we will consider not just our own opinions but the opinions of everyone, including the generations to come. Thank you for listening. I am now going to invite Jeremy Bell to come up from JBKS Architects, and he is going to outline for you, first of all, the ideas that the church community have had and run through them with you.

Mr. J. Bell:

Good evening, everybody. It is a real honour and privilege to be here, such a packed audience on such an august occasion. I have never been to an Ecclesiastical Assembly and I think it is such a

marvellous sounding thing. My name is Jeremy Bell and I am the director of JBKS Architects. We specialise in churches and we have reordered about 16 churches so far since 2004. Our principles, at least my principle, is to make them as beautiful as possible, even more beautiful than they are, but make them practical. I was thinking back, and I have been in this sort of situation many times when presenting a building and people are a bit concerned about what the change is going to happen, but after it has happened I have never had anyone say: "What a disaster." I have won prizes, won awards and people have just said: "Is it not amazing. I never thought it would be this good." Another thing that we are warning churches about is that when churches are reordered and they become a kind of place which looks like something for the future, there is an almost immediate growth of around 30 per cent in the congregation numbers, and I do not take any credit for that. It is simply because there is a kind of rebranding and a new look. It is a place not just of yesterday but a place of today and tomorrow. So we do say to churches: "Do not think about only your existing congregation and your existing needs. You really do have to think about the future and where it is going." Just before I will go through the slides, the church is fundamentally about God and His people. It is about the worship of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and His place among the church group and also in the community. It is not really about buildings, church buildings. This is not about a building, it is about the church itself as a place of worship and it is about the people. Buildings are simply servants to the worship. In the Anglican church there is something called the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure, which is the law through which all of these permissions are granted. It says that fundamentally you have to think of the worship and mission of the church primarily to all persons. That means that if we are thinking about changing the church we have to think of: "Is this good for the worship and mission of the church in the future?" That is fundamentally the question. Is what is planned the right thing for the church today and in the future? This church is really beautiful. It is also quite quirky - you might be used to that - but it is really beautiful. But curiously, if you analyse the space, it is a sequence of vaults all added together. There is a square pointing from there to there and out to the perimeter. That was all about 12th century. It is really ancient. There was a church here before. The first church was just the chapel behind me. Then that square was added in the 13th century. In the 15th century the nave was added in 2 parts: first, the main nave behind where the stairs are and the side aisles. So it is an assembly of vaulted spaces added to one after the other. On the one hand that makes it really lovely because of these glorious vaults but on the other hand it gives the church a problem, which is that there is no way you can stand and address an entire congregation where everyone can see. There are a lot of people who cannot see me or see what is going on, and if we were holding a service up at the east end people could not see. So it has a kind of problem, it has an in-built problem. One of the things that we are going to try and do is address that without taking anything away from the beauty and grandeur of the building. The church plan is on the slide above me, and I can see the screen over there, which is why I am not just wandering into the distance. I am just looking over there. You can sort of see that the seating area, which is where you are seated, which are the little white stripes, is a very small proportion of the whole space. It is only about 25 per cent where you are seated, in only about 30 per cent of the area. But you can

see what the fundamental problem is, that unless you are sitting in the main space and looking up the tunnel, you cannot really see what is happening.

[00:30]

Now the reordering of 1865 was really something that happened all over the Church of England, which was to try to implement what was called the "Oxford Movement", which took churches back into a medieval model of a far east end altar in a sanctuary and then a choir and then the people. Very often there was a rood screen erected here through which you had to look. They were not too bothered about participation all those centuries before participation was important. So this church, its current arrangement, is an attempt by the Victorians to turn this into a kind of Oxford Movement arrangement. It was difficult. You could see that it was difficult. The other thing is that Victorian churches put in as many pews as possible, as tightly packed as possible, because they rented them out. Some have been removed, you can see pieces of pew platform in the front here and the back. Some have been removed to make a bit more space but really it was a question of pack as many people as possible in and in those days the church was simply a service held on a Sunday morning. It was a one-week activity. But today's church is different. It is much more participative. It is much more active and one needs to really have things which can happen all through the week, and you need a lot of flexibility in a space to make that work. So fundamentally what we are proposing is to leave this incredibly beautiful building as it is, no stone of wall or ceiling or roof or doorway is to be moved. We want to refurnish it. We also want to put in some toilets and make it warmer. This church is nice and warm now but when we came in this afternoon, the heating had been on since early morning, it was freezing. Granite is a wonderful cold store. It would keep a lot of cold in. So our brief was to provide meeting spaces so that groups which meet offsite can come and meet onsite to provide flexible meeting spaces, to put in new toilets, to have flexible and comfortable seating, to improve invisibility, to put in new heating. This is like an eye test for me here. Just excuse me. To put in sensitive alterations to the existing fabric and to careful consideration of the significance of the history of the church. So I will carry on and show you how we are doing that, how we propose to do that. This is the proposed ground floor plan. We intend to have the main porch coming in, the kind of beige-coloured area is the porch coming in on either side, which I will show you details later. There will be a toilet on either side so that it is in a discreet location. You do not have to be going anywhere within the space but it is also attached to the church. It is not an outside building, and it is not also a pod within the church. Then you come in on to this main area here with the big skylight is what is called "the crossing" and it is a wonderful kind of roundabout. It is a beautiful space and it really would lead you to the chancel chapel or to the meeting area. The meeting areas are blue. Or it will lead you straight through this way to the meeting area, which is currently in the long part of this original 13th century fabric. This small pink area, which is currently where the organ will be, there will be a vestry. The main seating area is over here. This was a real piece of consideration. We will go through bit by bit. The red line shows the detail. The east end will still remain as beautiful as it is, and it will still be used for formal worship at any time but for most of the time it will be a chapel. So

it will be a quiet place where you could come in and pray. It will also be a place where smaller services can be held on a weekday morning or on an early Sunday morning in a formal way. Nothing will be taken away from it. It will be slightly screened off on either flank but not at the back. So it will really be part of the main entrance and one of the main sort of dictating vistas from the church. It will be as beautiful as it is, just better lit. This shows an example of one of our restorations in St. Mary's, Wallingford. This has been radically changed but then restored back to what it was. This made the front cover of *Church Building* magazine and I am quite proud of it. The colours really brought it all to life but it is a chapel now and it is still the choir stalls but we took up the floor, there were 19 burials underneath, which we very carefully preserved, and we put in a new floor with heating in it. Then restored it all back again, with the pews beautifully restored. Just an example of the sort of care and quality that we take. This next red line around the building shows the long space which is currently very useful as a chapel and as a meeting room, but it will be slightly partitioned off with glass - beautiful glass which you will see later - and a sliding folding screen delicately put in. The vaults will still be there, the windows will still be there, and it will look beautiful. We want to reconcile the levels because at the moment there is a step here and there is a step behind me, because we want the entire building to be disabled-friendly. There is an existing ramp which will remain and the lower area will remain at the floor level that it currently is. The long meeting room will be split into 2 and the other blue one - which is that area up there where the registration took place tonight - that will be the third meeting space. That will mean that the children do not have to be bussed off to some other place, but it also means that a lot more activities can happen during the week. Let us move on. Then this is the area here where there is the vestry. Currently the pulpit is in a position which is not of any sort of wonderful significance, and it is a fine piece of work. We intend to make a place for it at the west end and also the font at the west end. I think we are moving on to the west end. This is the biggest part of the church here and we did not really see this in our first few visits to this church, but those of you who are standing in the back by the font will be able to look forward and appreciate how much side view you can get from when you are there. So if we are looking for a space where a modest amount of worship space can take place it is in this west-end area with the focal point being at the back of the church, not the front. But as I have said, this is a flexible arrangement. By having chairs and not pews you can turn the chairs around and face the other way, or you can face that way. I hasten to add that some people might think: "Well, that is a strange thing to have because all churches face east." That is untrue; they do not all face east and there is nothing in law which says that they have to. There is nothing in the Anglican Church Law which says that they have to face east and, as you will remember from the slide that Ian showed before, before the Victorians came the churches faced centrally, they did not face east or west. So this is the best place for a kind of collective worship in a fairly contemporary way with a dais at the back and a place of great significance for the pulpit - which will come into full function - and the font on that side. We also wish to make much more open the 2 west doors because there is a fabulous view out there and when you are inside you cannot really see out, so it is quite a shut in kind of feeling that you get when you are in here. So that is what we wish to do. We do not want to open them out, as it were, make it totally open, but we want to make them openable so there are both solid doors and

glass doors so that you can see out to the fabulous landscape beyond. It is God's world out there and there is no reason why we should not look at it. The floor is a Victorian floor so the pew platforms have got hollows below them. It would have been completely destroyed by the Victorians before they put the pew platforms and the wooden structure. In fact, the most effective way of heating this church would be to put in a floor heating system here which is in a thermal mass which can just keep a low level of warmth all the time. The warmth does not go up too much, it stays on the floor and your feet are warm and your body is cool. It is very comfortable and it is fairly economical to run, and it is the cheapest heating system to install of everything. It is cheaper to install than pipes and radiators, you might be amazed to know. So we will carry on now to the toilets. I will just flip to the detail. As you come in the main porch doors there is a slightly wider space to the 2 flank windows, one is behind the place where the fabulous silverware is; that window and this window here. There is a slightly bigger distance on one side to the other and that really means that you can place a full disabled toilet on the one side and another sort of fairly generous ambulant disabled toilet on the other, but set them back from the front of the church. The picture above shows that they can be nestled in very neatly behind the porch, also mirroring the fact that at the end gabled wall you have got 3 peaks, so this is the same, 3 peaks, and it is nestled in very, very neatly and not made to look like a toilet. It is just made to look like a piece on a building. Very, very frequently old buildings have got added bits and they have been added sensitively and in the same language. So we build a 3D model of the church and what they will look like. I hope you can see as clearly as when we were building the model. It looks just really good on the TV screens that we have been doing; I hope it looks as good there. Then another of the pieces of the brief was storage. Storage is a way of getting rid of clutter and clutter is one of the things that really kill church; it can make it look awful when so much stuff is collected. But we can make beautiful furniture in the places where it has been shown, in a vestry area, along these screens which are currently here. They could be thicker and contain storage and there could be some lovely bits of furniture in the long chapel area. So we can accommodate a lot of furniture without it imposing into the space or without building store rooms. Finally, I want to show you, this is a maxed-out seating plan facing east, facing the normal way. So for a big funeral, a big occasion, Christmas, Easter, the church can be set out in a very formal way and it will seat 394, which is a lot.

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I cannot say that everybody will see; it will be just about the same as it is now, but 394, call it 400. So it can still be rearranged in that way and it can still be a very formal church; but our proposal is really to give the church the best of both worlds, to make it possible to be used in the traditional way but also to make it possible to be used in a way which would better support the church of the future. Just in conclusion ... yes, I have not got to the conclusion yet, I have got to the photos of the model. This is the west end, we are reusing the same sort of colour carpet, but it shows the position of the font and also the position of the pulpit on a new, slightly raised area at the back of the church. This is looking from the back towards this end of the church. The arches would still be

as lovely as ever. You will be able to see the bases of the pillars as they go down to the floor, which is one of the benefits of not having pews, then you see much more of the space than you do when there are pews. This is the entrance area into the church, through into the beautiful crossing area from the main foyer. Very spacious. We intend to put this as a stone floor so that you come in on a traditional stone floor into the middle of the church, and in the distance will be a very delicate glazed screen into the long chapel area and also the wooden screen into the meeting room on your right. This is looking straight up the church, which is the view that you have at the moment. Obviously, the chairs could be turned around the other way but I hope that from this you can see that we are not destroying the church at all. This is looking further forward, this is into the formal chantry chapel which gets restored as a place of quiet prayer and formal worship. This is a slightly elevated picture looking at the kind of everyday, Sunday family sort of worship space, which would be extremely suitable for a church of the present day and the future. This is looking down the ramp, looking down towards the place where the font will be. The font will be axially on that space, looking straight down with a lovely glass window beyond. So we want to sort of formalise some of the things which are a bit ... well, we just really want to place that somewhere which is good. This is looking from the ... in that meeting area. This is really an area where the registration table is. It is looking back at the beautiful glass screen which screens off the vaulted area, but the vault carries through the glass, and this can be used for meeting rooms and children's work and also for refreshments. This is the long space behind me to the right, to your left, and again this is going to be screened off with a beautiful big wooden screen. You can see the storage spaces. This is an example of one of the buildings that we restored and reordered and you might think: "Well, what did you do there?" We did an awful lot. We took up the entire floor, we re-laid it with the slate coloured tiles and heating, so the entire church is warm. Here there was a massive heating problem because of the height of the church, but it is really warm and it can be used for lots of things. We put in new lighting. Now, I know in this church that you have put in lighting quite recently so all the wiring is good, but the metal halide lights are even now beyond their sort of technological time and L.E.D.s (Light Emitting Diodes) have come on and they are much more usable. It takes a long time for these to heat up and they make a lot of noise doing so, so you cannot switch them on and you cannot dim them, you cannot really do anything except switch some of the spots off. So by replacing the fittings, not really the wiring ... the lighting is good here but I think it could do with some downlight as well as some up light. Just by replacing the fittings we could transform this building into a much more beautifully lit space. This example is a very cathedral-like space. There is no cathedral in England - except Chichester - which has pews; they all have chairs, so pews are a very Victorian thing and mostly used in Parish churches. But it is used much, much more frequently and much, much more regularly because of the amount of things that they could have. I went to a conference there and it was set out with tables and chairs. So in conclusion this is really a 100-year strategy for this church, both as a building and as a place of worship for people to grow in. I have said that we are not really in the business of destroying history because it is really so significant and so beautiful, and we have to go through all sorts of hoops in order to make sure that there is a very, very good case to do anything to the

significance of a historic building. This is one and this is beautiful. So thank you very much and I will pass it back to Ian.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

We are going to show you a video of the model that Jeremy has just described and where you have seen some of the still images, hopefully, if that is going to work. Hopefully you will see from that animation what this space and this building could look like. It falls on me to talk about money and even though - as you will have seen from the convening notice for this meeting - there is no money on the agenda, if that makes sense; we are not asking and there is not a vote on the money, clearly it is an important part of the conversation and we want to recognise that. What I am going to show you in a second is the current feasibility estimate for the project. As it says, that includes a 15 per cent overhead for all of the preliminary works that need to be undertaken, and also a 5 per cent contingency because we all know things change. Those of you who are familiar with current building costs in Jersey will be very aware that it is a moveable feast, and given that there is going to be inevitably quite a lot of time between whatever decision is taken tonight and an eventual planning approval or Ecclesiastical Court process, the costs are inevitably going to change. No matter how accurate we are as we stand today there is no doubt that the number that you are going to see will change. The estimates are very accurate. We have worked very hard with Tillyard's, the Q.S. (Quantity Surveyor), and also with the consultants to get as accurate a quote as we can. There are some things that still need to be decided but most of the numbers are absolutely tied down as we stand today based on the plan as presented to you all at this moment in time. To re-emphasise, there is no vote about money tonight. Any vote of monies that will be required or requested of the Parish will formally be requested at a Parish Assembly which you will all get another opportunity to vote at. That Parish Assembly will be presented with a formal full cost plan and a formal and a formal how it will be paid for plan. So only at that point in time would the Parish be asked whether they wanted to contribute to the cost or not. As it stands at the moment we have identified items that could be considered as costs to be met by the trésor. Those include the heating that has been described, the toilets, some health and safety items such as a ramp to access the dais, new fire alarms and thing like that, that are required in all buildings now, and a small amount for the lighting. The total cost of that at the moment is £213,500. If I go on to the next slide, this is the breakdown of the costs. Now, I am hoping that is legible. It is very hard to make numbers legible in any sort of presentation but hopefully you can see that. I will go through it for you. The top half of that chart or that table are sort of the physical elements of the building, so the toilets, the meeting rooms, the welcome area, the new nave area and the chapel behind me. The total cost of that is £434,191.85. The vast majority of that cost is expected to be church cost. The next items, storage, what says "items" but should say "health and safety items", heating, lighting and sound and vision; the total cost of that is £237,970.

[01:00]

As you can see, those items split quite equally both between the church and the trésor almost entirely; some falls one side and some falls the other. We then have the general preparatory work, that is all the stuff required to get the site ready to be used, and that brings the total cost of actual physical work to £733,000. We have then added the preliminaries that I described earlier and at this stage we have just pro rata'd that between the 2 elements, the church and the trésor, and we have kept the contingency at this point allocated to the church because we believe that the numbers that are being quoted for the trésor items are as accurate as they are going to get so they should not change. So as I say, total cost at this point of £885,000. That excludes professional fees, which is the normal way of quoting these items. The professional fees, again we have fixed price contracts from each of the 4 major parties involved, JBKS as architects, Tillyard as quantity surveyors, and then Henderson Green and Hartigan who are the professional advisers. So 10 per cent fixed cost uplift on that and again who pays for that would be a matter for a presentation to the Parish. To reiterate again, there is no vote on money tonight. At this stage all we are going to ask you for - and I will go over that again in a few minutes - is a permission to go yes/no, effectively, can we move forward. A vote on money, should that be necessary, will be presented to the Rates Assembly in due course. So I think that ends the presentation part of this evening. We are now going to move to a question and answer session. As you can tell there are a lot of people here and I am sure many of you will want to speak. In order to get as many people to speak as possible and so that we are not here long into the night we would like to try and ask you to limit your questions to one question. If there is time you will have an opportunity to ask a second question or a follow up. We will also ask you to limit any statement that you make to 2 minutes, so 2 minutes including your question please. There will be a microphone passed around. Because the Assembly is being recorded could you please very clearly state your name before you ask the question so that is captured by the recording because we need to make sure that the minutes are accurate. Barry is going to pass around the microphone so please ask your questions and please address them to either Ian, myself, or to Jeremy, depending on who is most appropriate. Thank you. Are there any questions? You might have to shout because we cannot necessarily see.

Mr. R. Waterhouse:

Robert Waterhouse, archaeologist for the Société Jersiaise. What are you planning on doing regarding archaeological recording work in the course of the works?

Mr. J. Bell:

If there is archaeology then we will do a watching brief on it. But I think that what we need to do before that is to do an archaeological desktop study to ascertain whether there is archaeology or not. But as I have said before, the amount of work underneath the church would have been completely destroyed by the Victorians and we also would not be excavating down in any particular depth to encounter it. So my answer is we will be attempting not to encounter any archaeology because we do not really want to disturb any current burials. There will be lots of burials under this area but they will probably be vaulted and in all likelihood the Victorians would

have collapsed the vaults and put all their builders rubbish into the vaults. That is what they did, and I have done it a number of times. So below your feet is a void probably about 400 or 500 millimetres and we will just be simply filling that up, so I really hope that we will not be disturbing any archaeology but there are of course ways of finding out what there is at the moment and I am sure that the archaeologist behind me will be able to advise us and be able to also inform us what they require.

Mr. F. Le Maistre:

Francois Le Maistre. Could I ask why it is that we need to move, as I can see from the plans, the organ completely when it was only rebuilt just over 50 years ago?

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Francois, so the conversations we have had with the Island's leading organists, and also people within the congregation who use the organ in services, the organ is described variously as a practice organ, as a Ford Fiesta of an organ. Not meaning to be rude to any Ford Fiesta drivers, like my wife. It is not the Royal Albert Hall organ. As many people will know, we do use the organ in services but relatively infrequently, and so as a large piece of furniture that takes up a large piece of real estate we were looking to try and find an alternative to that. We are assured by those professional organists that better quality is available in a more portable version. So by removing the organ pipes and removing the actual organ console and replacing them in a more relevant place for the reoriented church we can achieve better sound, create more space, and still honour the use of organs when we want to do so, so for example at funerals or on the high days and holidays-type services where it tends to be used more by the congregation. Sorry, I should have said this at the start, please could you evidence that you have a voting slip if you are going to ask a question, because unfortunately you can only speak at an Assembly if you are eligible to vote. I should have said that before, sorry.

Mr. M. Webster:

Martin Webster. Two parts to my question; to the nearest 100 what is the average number of churchgoers for week? That is for the president of the meeting.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Can you ask your second part because you are only supposed to ask one question?

Mr. M. Webster:

Well the second part is if this is passed you will be asking for £230,000 contribution from the Parish for what I believe is a very small group. This represents nearly half of the total Parish reserves built up over centuries, or a 33 per cent increase in the 2019 rates. How can you justify wanting half the total reserves for a small minority, or a 33 per cent rise in the rates?

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Do you want to answer the first part and I will answer the second?

Rev. I. Pallent:

Thank you, Martin, for the question. The church electoral role of the Parish church members is approximately 120 adults basically, and obviously then there are roughly about 40 under 18s that go with. So basically that is the official church figures. Going on to the question of the finances.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

So as I have said, this is not a meeting to talk about money. It is not on the agenda and, therefore, technically we should not be talking about it. However, there is no request to the Parish for £230,000. That is not what we are asking for. What we have said and what I have shown you is that the current allocation of costs would indicate that £213,000 would be eligible for the trésor. If that proposition is put to a Parish Assembly and if it is accepted by the Parish Assembly then the Parish would have to decide how it paid that money. It may choose to put the rates up, it may not. As you have rightly said the Parish has reserves, it could choose to use those reserves, and there are any number of other ways that it could choose to fund that. I cannot reiterate this enough: this meeting is not about money. **[Attendees: Oh!]** I know that it is what everyone is talking about and thinking about but the agenda item that we are asking you to consider is not an agenda item about money. That vote, if it happens, will happen at a Parish Assembly in the future. We are trying to be as totally honest as we can be with everybody. There is no request to the Parish at this time for finance. I am not saying it will not happen but it is not happening today and it is not happening at this meeting.

Mr. P. German:

Hello, my name is Peter German. I am the person responsible for the 2 ankle biters that have been in the corner here assuming some of my fellow congregation members; one of them trying to reprise his role for the nativity I think with an inflatable crown. I have been a Christian for near on 30 years. A church building to me is a place for church family and for ... and I am, as you might have guessed, not a native of this Island. I have been here for a number of years but not a native. We are hugely blessed by the age of this building. It is many, many years longer than the culture from which I come. So it is a huge blessing to have a beautiful old building like this. It is incredibly valuable. It is also something that needs to be about the people. I referred to my 2 young sons because one of the things that I think is essential here, and it is the thing that struck me when I first came through that door, and that was: what about the kids? Because this place needs to grow and it needs to encourage families and it needs to be relevant for the community. Part of that is respecting tradition, part of that is respecting what we have here and all the beauty that we have. But putting up some classroom so we can have the kids on site so that we do not have a Mickey Mouse arrangement that frankly I was very unhappy with, having the kids taken somewhere else, I do not know by who at the time - I have got to know them - and I did not know how they were going to get back and I did not know what conveyance they were going to be using. They certainly were not going to be using my car with my car seats. These are all obstructions to

people who are new, people who are coming here for the first time, for visitors, for those coming to large gatherings like weddings and baptisms. So for me one of the beauties of this proposal is that it brings the church family together and by creating these rooms you create flexible space which can be used for community purposes as well. I also think that there is a lot of sense in turning this area around so it is more usable space. At the moment 99 per cent of the time these pews are empty. By using chairs you can open this space, you can use it for youth activities, you can certainly see a lot more ... my time is up. I have been hooked.

[01:15]

Mr. C. Lamy:

Christopher Lamy, Le Pulec. At 10.35 a.m. on Tuesday 15th August last year I arrived home to find this on my desk. It was from the members of the Parish church with St. George's Church. It claimed to be a survey for all, yes all, St. Ouen's households for them as a church to make better provision for the parishioners. Being ecumenical I have a respect for the whole of the Christian denominations. I wonder why the other 21 denominations who place the times of their Sunday services in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* have not been invited to join them. I asked a senior Parish official why he had left the Parish church and now attended St. George's. He said that he and some fellow churchgoers had left because the Parish church was becoming too evangelistic with happy clappers. In the 2011 census - it has increased since then - there were 4,097 residents in St. Ouen. The church - and I confirmed it last Wednesday night - has a regular congregation of less than 50, thus less than 1.2 per cent of the St. Ouen's residents attend. Is this £1 million exercise to attract and increase the congregation? The people who have left legacies to the church must be turning in their graves with the ripping out of these beautiful benches of the 1860s to be replaced with plastic looking chairs facing the west wall. The proposed plans will be a total desecration of this beautiful historic Norman church. It is an un-Christian act, especially as the ratepayers are being asked to aid and abet this sin with a 30 per cent plus increase in their rates bill. Maybe the Rector has not realised that most of these ratepayers can only dream of the luxury lifestyle that they pay for him to enjoy. **[Attendees: Oh!]**

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Can I respond please first, thank you? So to respond to that I am going to reiterate the statement that I have made 3 times already: there is no request to the Parish to increase the rates at all. Some of the comments that you have made, Chris, are inappropriate, I have to be honest and say. They are not something that I am going to even respond to because I just do not think it is appropriate to make it in any way a personal conversation. This is not a personal conversation, this is about what is the best for this church building which you seem to honour, but not in the way you have spoken I am afraid.

Mr. B. Follain:

Brian Follain, St. Ouen. Fellow parishioners, we are here to vote and decide on the future of our Parish church. But it is not only our church but a Parish monument that has stood the test of time for over 1,000 years. It is a symbol of our birth, our death, and in between where we can come, find peace in a quiet location for prayer, solace and a place of sanctuary and quiet contemplation. But if our Vicar gets his wish this will change. The transformation, it will not only change the fabric of the church, but it will no longer be at traditional church as we know it and love and appreciate, but more of an enterprise that one might - and I say might - find in the middle of a large inner city. Well this is not Birmingham or Moss Side; this is St. Ouen and we are traditionalists. We all read in the *Evening Post* and here on local radio very frequently of English experts coming to Jersey, telling us the way forward and what to do in our Island. Well I do not need to be told, I know the way forward in relation to this sacred monument and that is to leave it alone. It has been with us over 1,000 years and that is a testament that our forefathers were totally satisfied, and so am I. We have toilets within the curtilage of our church, within a short distance from the front entrance, which incidentally are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and recently monies were spent in the upgrading. Some may debate that toilets should be in the church. I personally disagree. However, should it later be decided to install these lavatories then they should be sited away from the general area.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Brian, could you go to your comment because you have got ... your 2 minutes are up so could you get to your question?

Mr. B. Follain:

I am sorry, I do apologise. Mr. German did not ask a question and I would be grateful if you would hear me please.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

No, you have extended beyond 2 minutes so could you wrap up please. **[Attendees: Oh!]** Come to a conclusion please.

Mr. B. Follain:

With due respect I have been approached by numerous parishioners and I am speaking on behalf of numerous parishioners and, with respect, this is an open meeting and I would be grateful for the Vicar to give his permission that I continue for another 2 or 3 minutes speaking on behalf of other people.

Rev. I. Pallent:

Okay then, go on. **[Approbation]**

Mr. B. Follain:

I thank you, Vicar. I believe the location where people greet their friends and acquaintances at funerals and baptisms, et cetera, and where photographs are taken are predominantly taken at the entrance to the church. Thus, with these personal facilities, flushing the toilet, opening the door, can be an embarrassment and, therefore, I do not believe, should toilets be deemed necessary, that they be there. Also this proposal to re-site our service location; so instead of facing east we will have our back to the east, and I am greatly surprised that traditionalists of this church or our Vicar want to change the format of service and prayer in this ancient church from facing east to west. All Parish churches - and I repeat all Parish churches in Jersey - without exception face east. But of course it is designed by some in St. Ouen that we be different. Well I do not want to be. Not only are we asked to change the format of our beloved church but by doing so we go against the tradition of prayer and the Bible, as I have been advised by a highly respected personal friend of mine who is a vicar in another church in Jersey. In relation to the organ it is proposed to be removed and replaced by an electric keyboard. Well, Monsieur Francois Le Maistre has clearly covered that aspect and I believe that it should remain and its pipes are part of the fabric of the church. It is proposed to have meeting rooms including a kitchen, café, Kangaroo Club and community centre within the church. Well, we already have a community centre and the rectory has a built-in meeting room, so why do we need change or more meeting places? St. Ouen does not lack community facilities. We have the Parish Hall plus our community centre. What we need is our church, not another community centre. In relation to the removal of the pews I would suggest that if they are deemed uncomfortable the church should supply - as St. George's does - long, thick cushions to seat on. Also the seating area will be greatly reduced with the additional chairs being placed in meeting rooms and these rooms are petitioned off so would effectively be segregated from the main area of the church, hardly conducive for a funeral. Also assuming we have additional chairs as required for funerals, where will they be housed: assuming around the Parish Hall area, so therefore we have transport facilities and cost. Now, £75,000 spent in 2008 on lighting, rewiring and the carpets, et cetera, so that should be remembered. I could continue but I had better not. I shall briefly end. However, I must bring attention to the Assembly that I am given positively to understand that Planning are listing our church as a grade I listed building very, very shortly, and have described the church as of special interest where both the interior and exterior is of fundamental importance to the heritage of Jersey, being one of the oldest and most significant historic buildings in Jersey where the nave, crossing tower and chancel date from the 12th century. Therefore, I can envisage problems in the future. The only slight joy about this evening is our Vicar stated the other day to a *J.E.P.* reporter: "If the Parish vote against I will build elsewhere and only use the church for Sunday services, weddings and funerals." Well, what can I say except that is what the church was built for. **[Approbation]** It is immaterial that the church may finance all or part of the proposed cost for this proposed project because the church belongs to the people of St. Ouen. This church belongs to all the parishioners and not just 2 per cent who attend on a Sunday. We are custodians of this church and have responsibility for it. It would be an absolute sacrilege in the eyes of God to vote in favour of this proposition to desecrate and destroy both the history of our church and our Parish for future reference. Now, in relation to finance which nobody is permitted to speak, I will say that 8.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 24th July 2007 a

respected parishioner asked what the liability of the Parish to the church was. Before I quote the reply from a very, very eminent and highly respected gentleman who I will not mention - but he is documented - I have made extensive inquiries within the Island and I have been told, which confirms the eminent gentleman's reply, that we as parishioners are only duty bound for wind and watertight and should the parishioners vote anything extra it is because they have deemed they want to. So, therefore, this £231,000 coming from our rate or other areas may not be legal. We are duty bound for wind and watertight only. This is precisely what this learned gentleman who resided in St. Ouen said. His reply at 8.00 p.m. on 24th July 2007; we were liable only to wind and watertight. I thank you for giving me your time. **[Approbation]**

Mr. R. Le Breton:

So to respond to the last point and to reiterate again, we are not asking this Assembly to talk about money. As Brian points out, the obligation - and I will use that word "obligation" - of trésor is, as Brian said, to wind and watertight. But, as I have said earlier, if a proposal is taken to the Parish Assembly it is for the Parish Assembly to decide how it responds to that request. It may, as Brian has said, choose to vote more money, it may not. That is the Parish Assembly's prerogative, it is not the subject of this Ecclesiastical Assembly, which is to seek approval to move forward with the proposal which will include going to planning, as Brian has pointed out. They will have an interest in this building, they will make some decisions, and it also includes going to the Ecclesiastical Court for their approval and they will have an interest in this building and they will make decisions. But we cannot get to that point until we have gone through this legal process which requires coming to you, the parishioners, as the owners of this building, and asking for your permission to move forward.

[01:30]

There are many, many obstacles still ahead regardless of what happens tonight and there will be many more opportunities for everybody here to have a say and have another opportunity to voice their opinion in the future.

Ms. J. Brotherton:

Janet Brotherton, Christian and member of St. George's Church. I would like to ask a question of our States Member, and possibly the architect, and it is about the disabled toilets. Now, in Jersey we have a law coming in, in September, about discriminating against people with disabilities; it is one of the last parts of the Discrimination Law. So public buildings are going to have to have disabled toilets and disabled access and I would ask our politicians, does this not include churches? Disabled toilets are going to have to happen whether we like them or not.

[Approbation]

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Janet, I will answer that for Michael because you are absolutely right. There is an obligation on the Parish for a Parish building in the future to have disabled toilets. There is no doubt that is an absolutely clear obligation. What I would say - and I am going to steal words probably that I would have used later on - regardless of what happens tonight there are obligations that will not go away. So, for example, that obligation for toilets, that will not go away. Obligations for other health and safety aspects of this building will not go away. All of those changes that are coming the Parish is going to have to deal with, that means we all are going to have to deal with them. The heating in this church is at least 10 years past its sell-by date. The boiler was put in, in 1970 we think, in the 1970s with a 25-year useful life. It could be that next Monday that blows up and we will turn around to the Parish at that point and say: "Well, what do we do?" So some of what we are proposing is, if you like, long term preventative; some of it is absolutely meeting obligations that will be coming in October this year for disabled toilets and disabled access and universal disabled access, not just to the bits that happen to have a ramp on them.

Mr. M. Hewlett:

Mr Rector, Martin Hewlett. It is a rector, by the way, not a vicar. It is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and the proposals in front of us tonight are absolutely stunning. I defy anybody to say they are not impressed by the work that the architects have put in to make wonderful use of this magnificent space. It will bring a real wow factor that will amaze and delight locals and visitors alike. We and you will be proud to play a part in it. I can understand that some people will think that we are deserting or even miring a long tradition of worship in this Parish church and risk destroying its special atmosphere. I have lived the St. Ouen's church life, this tradition, all my life. I will claim to be and can claim to be the longest serving - continuously serving - member of this church. I moved to the Parish in 1950 with my family. Some of you might have been taught by my father; I apologise for that. I went to Sunday school and Bible class, I joined the choir and remained a member of that choir until it ceased to function. I taught Sunday school, Bible class, I started a youth group, I became a lay reader and a church warden and have led worship. I take part in the worship week by week here, I do not see a lot of you here, it would be good to see you, and warming your bottoms on these comfortable pews. I take part in the worship here week by week throughout the year. I am the last person that would want to destroy a place that has played such an important part in my life. But this is not 1950, it is not 1970 or 1990. We live in a different society. This place is not a museum piece, preserving life in a bygone age. This is not the National Trust maintaining a building at a set period of time. This place is the spiritual heart of our Parish and, as such, it has to stay strong, healthy and active; and I know about hearts, having had a heart attack. We must stay true to our message but adapting our approach. It is very easy to pay outward attention to forms of religion but the Christ that we follow here is for every time and place and person. It is for children, youth, families, singles, elderly, the happy, the sad, the lonely, the lost. That is what we are here for and this Parish is full of people that fall into one or many of those categories. These proposals add new life and fresh breath to a place of great beauty, bringing it into the sphere of so many for which the church has become an irrelevance, making the largest public space in St. Ouen accessible to the community as a whole. If I planted a tree in my

garden today at my age I would not see it in its maturity. We are not just doing it for ourselves; we are doing it for our children and our children's children. If we fail to grasp this exciting and challenging opportunity before us today, if we fail to grasp that it will be our children and the generations to come that will judge us. So do not let us bury our heads in the sand and hope the future will go away. Do not let us be accused by future generations of being inward looking, complacent and self-satisfied. I would urge you here tonight not to look back, not to give way to your fears of change or to your prejudices or preconceptions but to look to the future, to have a vision of what could be, to embrace the change and to vote in favour of these proposals. Thank you. **[Approbation]**

Mr. K. Syvret:

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ken Syvret and I can match Martin Hewlett because I have been at this church now for 65 years. I have been a church warden, I have been an almoner. I served under Edward Richardson and I served under Dennis Gurney and I have served under John Harkin. I have been here at 7.30 a.m. every Sunday morning probably for the last 20 years to prepare for communion. I have also been the Greffier of the Ecclesiastical Court in Jersey for 44 years. I can claim to be able to say something not necessarily to agree with those people who want to do what we have been proposed, this evening, to this church. I was very, very upset that we had a presentation lasting nearly an hour and half and suddenly we were told that we would each have 2 minutes in which to speak; that is quite, quite wrong, we should have been given the time we need to speak. I have prepared a paper but I am afraid, because of the limitations, I cannot tell you what is on that paper.

Male Speaker:

Yes, you can.

Mr. K. Syvret:

There is a chairman ...

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Yes, you can.

Mr. K. Syvret:

Thank you. I am used to public speaking but this is different, this is about my church. I do apologise I am a terribly emotional person and sometimes I cannot hide that emotion. So please do understand, I am not doing this in order to persuade you to agree with what I have to say this evening, I genuinely am emotional about this. We had a first meeting here of the congregation, which I attended. The second meeting, I was not able to come because I just felt that I would not be able to manage the meeting. But I had to come this evening. The other side of the story must be put, and if you will allow me I think it will take me about 7 or 8 minutes to tell you what I have prepared. I believe that my feelings on this matter are generally well known; I am simply against

the whole scheme. But simply saying that one is against the scheme is not sufficient; there must be a reason. I will try to highlight some of our reasons by looking at the pamphlet which has been circulated to parishioners. We have lots of emotional phrases in this short document but one which I can see as putting into words the feelings of many St. Ouennais is “cherish the past”. We are fast seeing our Island destroying its past, so please remember these words when it comes to casting your vote this evening, and that vote for change by the congregation was not overwhelming. On page 2 of the pamphlet, we read: “Most of what you see originates or was last restored in 1860.” Wrong. The church was rededicated in 1890 after restoration by the Reverend George Clement. That work was over a period of 30 years and it is proposed that we destroy it in 4 to 6 months. Under the proposals we will turn our backs on the east window, which was donated by Colonel E. C. Malet de Carteret at the time of George Clement’s restoration. The pulpit, here on my right, of fine Caen stone was presented to the church by the ladies of the congregation, and the font, by contrast, in fine Jersey granite, was the gift of Philip Le Feuvre of Trodez. Lieutenant Colonel R. Gardner Warton, in his signal work published by the Societe Jersiaise in 1920, says of the restoration: “The whole admirably carried out.” Although he did not agree with the wall finish but this was removed and restored in the time of Reverend John Harkin. Now, on page 2 of the document we are told that in the past the church was more than a place of worship, a community facility. This is correct but again quoting Colonel Gardiner Warton: “Parish meetings and elections were held within the sacred walls and even auction sales permitted. Decorations were damaged, sculptures defaced, the altar supplanted by a wooden table, wheeled out and put away on occasion as required. The sacred vessels [that is the silver] treated with contempt or made away with, all in the name of religion.” These were terrible mistakes of the past. The pamphlet circulated says: “We believe that the plans we propose will help, once again, make the Parish church one of the best community assets in St. Ouen, capable of being used throughout the week for a range of activities.” Do we really want to return to the past? We have a magnificent Parish Hall and a community centre, both in the centre of the Parish. Which brings me, if I may, to the Parish survey. In papers delivered in 2017 to every home, asking a range of questions, at the end of which we were told that opinions and ideas will be summarised in a report to be circulated to all households later this year. Well, if the survey was important for the debate and the decisions we have to make today, why have the results not been circulated? The survey includes the question: “Would you like to see any of the following additional activities or services offered in your Parish church throughout the week?” I quote: “Our church will become a meeting place for hire, it is suggested, for advocacy services, conferences, facilities for meeting rooms for support services, and among other ideas, second-hand bookshop [that appealed to me] **[Laughter]**, food bank and keep fit classes.” Now, let us consider this, very briefly, just those 3 last items. A second-hand bookshop: who will be at church to receive the books? Where will they be stored? What part of the church is planned for this activity let alone the actual running of the shop? A foodbank: well, the same questions arise there, running of the shop, who is going to do it? Where is the food going to be stored? Keep fit classes: again, where will these classes be run within the church? Storage of equipment, mats, et cetera. Now, I make one simple reference to Canon Law, and

Canon Law is the way in which the church rules itself, and the Canons were recently, in the last decade, changed so we are not looking at 1600 or 1700.

[01:45]

We are looking at modern day and that states: "The church wardens and their assistants shall not suffer the church to be profaned by any meeting therein for temporal objects inconsistent with the sanctity of the place." Temporal means secular; it follows that these activities would be questionable. Should any of these proposals happen, the church will need a full-time paid manager, I am absolutely sure. A commercial centre is envisaged, is it not? It seems to me that the project for an isolated building away from the centre of Parish activity is ill-thought, ill-planned and a promise of disaster and failure after destroying our beautiful church. In the pamphlet we are told the idea to use the church building throughout the week for the purposes suggested in - hold on, my pages have got out of order - in the survey was important to parishioners consulted in the survey, which was completed by just over one-third of households. A clever choice of words really which tells us absolutely nothing. Important: which ones, where, why? Looking at the results of the survey, which I only saw yesterday, one can paint a different picture to that provided where we are told that 58 per cent believe the need to be important. So let us look at the figures: 36 per cent of the population of St. Ouen responded to the survey of which just half of the respondents thought it to be important. So we have 58 per cent of 594, the number of respondents, is 344. So we have got 344 people out of 1,650 households in St. Ouen, which is 20 per cent. So, that is the view held by 20 per cent which means that 80 per cent were either disinterested or thought otherwise. You see, percentages can be used in any way; they can be used positively, they can be used negatively and I am sure that that is the correct position, that 80 per cent of the population were either disinterested or failed to take part in the survey. The glossy statement we had states: "The vision continues with statements which are questionable. Some parts have been demolished." This is referring to the building. "There seems to be little evidence of this for the north and south transepts [which is over there] were incorporated in the north and south nave aisles." Those 2 aisles on either side. One statement with which I can agree is: "The Parish church is the crown jewel of St. Ouen." Why, in that event, make these proposed dramatic changes destroying the heart of the jewel? The plan tells us that the chapel will be remodelled. This is not the case. The Epiphany Chapel, which is over there, will disappear completely becoming a meeting room, and a new so-called chapel will destroy completely the chancel behind me here, as we know it today. We are not told which pews or how many will be used to create the new chapel, save that the historic St. Ouen's Manor pew only and the Vanchelez Manor crest will be preserved. We are in serious danger of agreeing to changes, the details of which are not before us, and this applies to much of the whole scheme. For example, the plan which shows the proposed new toilets does not agree with the view of the south porch and toilets on the last page of the pamphlet. If you look at it very carefully they do not agree. The space on the east side between the east wall of the porch and the window quoins, is 5 foot 2 inches and that on the west is 6 foot; not enough space for the toilets and thus, it seems that the picture showing the south

façade of the porch and the toilets is correct by overlapping the windows on both sides and that the plan on page 3 is incorrect. The creation of 3 meeting rooms, in my view, is quite unnecessary. We see already the untidiness of the church with things stored in the choir stalls, behind the organ, behind the gazebo, which I see has been removed this evening, and even under the altar. We are not showing the respect to this sacred place of worship. The proposed kitchen in the south aisle multi-purpose area, which is over there, is not named at all on the pamphlet which we received. Why not? It will be a main feature of that area and open to view to everyone who enters the church with a café type counter. As recently as 2013 the church spent a large sum creating a new kitchen in the south-west corner of the south aisle; this will disappear just 4 years after use. Regretfully the proposed concertina door separating the proposed multi-purpose area from the welcome area will open against a treasury which contains the church silver. Now, who designed that? The information about the seating area contained in the pamphlet is interesting, for nowhere does it mention the removal of the pews. In fact, the pews are mentioned by name just once within the pamphlet in relation to the Seigneur's pew, which is to be moved to accommodate the proposed chapel. Equally interesting is the words: "On the information we think the plans improve the visibility and beauty of the historic building." Which suggests that seating in the church for larger services, to a maximum of 508, is very precise but questionable and that has been proved this evening because we have been told that figure is now 396 not 508. No information where the extra 320 chairs - well, that is now to be reduced to probably 228 chairs - to achieve this is given, always assuming that there will be 180 permanent chairs in the nave. If we have to judge the factual content of these proposals against such predictions then we must cast it aside; it is not giving the facts. I leave you to make your own mind up on the reorientation of the seating, which will face west, and the suggestion, which we have had this evening, that it will still be possible to use the building in its current configuration, if required, by simply turning the seating 180 degrees. Why? The pulpit and the font will be behind the congregation, as will the table, and the original altar will be hidden from view by the chapel pews. The proposed new heating system is not a matter upon which I wish to comment, save that it was comfortably warm at 7.30 a.m. on Sunday morning, one of the coldest days in the winter. Now, turning to cost, and I do object that we have been told that cost does not enter into this at all this evening; cost does enter into it. We have no details of estimates except what we have seen this evening, just global figures, and estimates are not quotations. I am told the 2 are different. You may have an estimate but when it comes to quotations things are very, very different. So how can we make a decision with such flimsy information and agree to spend £1 million? Well, that is what it will be. A strapline, a church that cherishes the past and embraces the future, is highly questionable when the proposal is to remove a greater part of the past or alter it to such an extent that its former use is wholly unpractical. Gone will be the Epiphany Chapel, the organ, the altar as a focal point for the communion service and, as important but not mentioned, the pews. Ladies and gentlemen, we have an important decision to make this evening. I have tried to raise what I consider to be relevant points to be considered carefully and with concern and care for our Parish church. I can confirm that the Planning Department is at present reviewing sites of special interest designation for all the Parish churches including the interior of the churches. During this process in the last 18

months I have gone through every emotion since these proposals were tabled. I have gone through sadness, I have gone through disappointment, I have gone through fear and I have questioned, really questioned, my stance in all these matters. I have asked myself: “Ken, are you doing the right thing?” We must reject these proposals, and in the words of the proposals themselves: “Save the crown jewel of St. Ouen.” Thank you very much. **[Approbation]**

Rev. I. Pallent:

Ken, thank you for your comments there. I do know this has been a difficult process and, as we can see, it raises a lot of issues and emotions for long-term members of this church who have given their, almost, lives, we might say, to this church and you will have differing opinions as we have tried to do. What I have liked about this process is that we have been able to disagree well, because inevitably, when it comes to the life of the church and its future, inevitably there is that tension between what is it here for and what is its purpose. Both have equal merits and equal value. The traditional side of Ken Syvret, who, as he said and who, as I appreciate, is here every Sunday at 7.30 a.m. in the morning and is here to set up communion, and who has a particular way of worshipping God that should be valued and is important. Then you hear the words of Martin Hewlett, who also has given his life to the church and who chooses to express his worship in different ways. Both are equally valid and that is quite important to say in the discussion. We may have our preferences but both are equally valid. Next question. We will go with Richard first.

Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen:

Thank you. Richard Renouf. I am a member of the church community and I have been worshipping here, not as long as Ken and Martin, but perhaps 40 years now. But many of you will know that I have also served as the Parish Deputy for the last 3 and a half years and that has been a great privilege. My eyes have been opened so much to Island life in my role as Deputy. Things I did not realise before, I have seen people living in wholly inadequate housing conditions, I have seen people working all the hours God sends and not being able to support themselves. We can see families struggling because well, their young people are subject to all sorts of pressures and families do not know how to deal with those. We have seen people whose mental health is affected by the strains of life these days and the pressures upon us. We have seen families that are trying to care for youngsters and elderly and we have seen stress placed on people in caring situations and they do not know where to turn and they do not feel they have adequate support. Life is stressful, is it not? Life is glorious, life is lovely but it is stressful as well for so many people. The support networks that may have existed in the past where we were parts of large families do not seem to exist anymore or people are too busy to offer that sort of support; I do not know but what I have seen is that there are a lot of vulnerable people in our communities and a lot of people who need support. Do not think that the States are going to be in the position to give that support. The States, yes, will do all they can, they will provide statutory services but the States are strapped for cash and probably always will be but there is more support that can be offered by living in a community. I would really love to see the Parishes step up to the mark and become supportive communities that would really look after each other. This is the Parish building, the

predominant historic Parish building, and the church community is part of the Parish and the church community wants to serve the Parish. That is the mission of the church, is it not, to go out to the vulnerable, to seek out the weak and to offer Christian service to them. I think we should consider how the church community wishes to offer itself now to the community, to redesign this place so that it can better serve our Parish in the century to come.

[02:00]

How we can provide that sort of support, which a community should be able to give and the church community is vibrant here and it wants to serve. I hope it can be given that opportunity to serve however the church is ordered but if it can be ordered in a way that can help to meet the needs of people in our community, that can only be for the good for us all and for our children. So, thank you very much. **[Approbation]**

Ms. E. Robbins:

Hello, my name is Emily Robbins. I have a question, it feels like a while since we have had a question. My question is: what potential do you think the reordering would unlock for the church to serve the community around it? I feel like I am in a very privileged position; I run the Kangaroos Playgroup here on Tuesday mornings, with a team of helpers and some staff members, and as Ken was speaking I was reminded of the fact that we are a church that does have paid members of staff. One part of the role of Kangaroos is to provide a space for children to come and have a playgroup. We, this week, welcomed our 100th family to register since we moved to the church at the beginning of October, and the sorts of issues that we are helping people with range from everything from putting food on plates and finding people to provide for them on the odd week but also people who have sick children and helping them just to think through logistics and stuff. One of the queries we had recently was about: "I have got to get to Southampton Hospital and I need a car seat" and the circumstances meant that it was just too difficult to work out how to do that and we were able to help. That is a lovely thing to see but I can appreciate how these plans would enable us to do more and I just wondered if you could tell us a bit behind the vision and what specifically do you think that will help unlock.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

So if I start and then perhaps Ian can add in. I think, Emily, in some ways you have answered your own question. I think, for me, what Richard has just said, I think, is really resonating. We, as a church, believe that we are here to serve the community and to be the facilitator. We do not think we have necessarily got all the answers but we hope that we can help to guide people or point them in the right direction of help. The Island is blessed with a huge number of charitable organisations, people who do everything from addiction counselling, through debt counselling, through working with disabled people, people with mental health issues; a huge range of things. The challenge is often, as you have just said, grasping that requirement when you need it and I believe that the church can be very instrumental in helping the community in that way. So,

whether that is as simple as a conversation with a mother at a playgroup or whether it is a friendly face to sit and listen to them talk or to unload their problems because often that is all people want, is just a listening ear. So it is just creating the space for that to happen.

Rev. I. Pallent:

I think all I would add to that, very briefly, is I just think a church should be used during the week and not just for, shall we say, Sunday services. What pleases me so much when I come along here on a Tuesday morning is the number of people who would probably never come inside a building like this starting to experience it, and really that is what we always have to look at when we are thinking about things, we have not just got to think about ourselves and what we might think is right for us but we have also got to be thinking about the future and a younger generation.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

So there is one in the middle and then we will come to you afterwards, madam.

Ms. M. Paddon:

Margaret Paddon. I am standing up, for those of you who do not know me. **[Laughter]** I help Emily at Kangaroos I provide the refreshments. When we met at the community centre we were having upwards of 30 children and nearly as many parents. I was having to struggle through 6 fire doors and 2 sets of steps to take the refreshments into the room we were using, and that is why we have moved to the Parish church.

Ms. J. Gare:

Jennifer Gare. We have heard some really disparate views this evening and my concern is that they are very polarised and my worry is that this could split the Parish community. I wish that this evening had been more about a collaborative consultative meeting and I wonder if, from here, there could not be a middle path; a way forward to bring these views together, have a discussion. My sense is that we are being presented with a *fait accompli* and we are being asked to vote yes or no, and I think that is going to be a very difficult decision for a lot of people here. So, I am just throwing it open: could there be, at some time in the very near future, a more collaborative consultative process where we might find the middle way through this? **[Approbation]**

Rev. I. Pallent:

Thank you, Jenny, for that question. I know we talked earlier and we did um and ah and deliberate quite a bit about how we approach this evening because inevitably there are differing views and the last thing that a church wants to do is polarise that debate. Sometimes that polarisation is not helped by external forces that try and stir things up and that is not helpful at all. I think what the church community wanted to bring was an overall vision. Clearly, whatever happens tonight, whatever outcome there is, if it is a more positive one then the church community will have to go away and think about what parishioners, who maybe do not come to church every Sunday, are saying about this building. There will inevitably be issues because for the first time ever, in

Jersey's history, there will be a secular control on any changes to the inside of a building. Now, when I think about traditionalists I do not think that is for the good personally, but that is the situation that there is. If the vote is more negative then clearly the needs of the church community are not going to go away. We love this building and when I use the word "we" I am talking about the church community that comes here every Sunday. We love this place, it is special, it has significant moments for us every Sunday. So you have to balance the 2. So, the debate will not go away and there will need to be some discussion that the Rectorat, in particular, will have to think about because of its responsibilities for this building and those needs that are not going to go away. Maybe the church community is going to have to go away and think about some of those ideas because we have heard some differing views like there are in the church community. It is not that one is right and it is not that one is wrong, or it is not that one is more valid than the other because you cannot separate that. You cannot separate out the quality of people that we have heard tonight; you cannot make a judgment on that, although we love to judge, because both are equally valid.

Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. Helier:

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Andrew Lewis, I am a Deputy of the States. I have a great passion for this church and the reason for that is that I was brought up in St. Ouen, I have a house just down the road very close to the church, that is where I was brought up. I went to Sunday school in the area over here and we had to be out fairly quickly because the congregation was coming in after us. That was 50 years ago. I know I do not look it. But my point is this: yes, I am passionate about this church. I was married here. The reason why I was married here was because I went to church here and the only way my family could all come was to get married here because they are all in the graveyard. So I have a very close affinity with this place. Our family property, I am currently renovating, and I hope soon to come back and live in the Parish; it is God's own Parish, as far as I am concerned. I have been a church warden at St. John's Church for many years. Not at the moment, but I have been. We went through a very similar process there a few years ago and it was unfortunately a negative vote. That church, unfortunately, is dying. There are very few members of the congregation that are under 60 and it is because the facilities there are not as they could have been. So I just want to urge an air of caution here. This is about the future, future generations, perhaps my grandchildren rather than my children, your grandchildren and children. That is the future of a church that is the life of a church. I respect absolutely Ken Syvret and Brian Vibert, who were the church elders when I was here as a child, and they are still the church elders, which is wonderful. But there is a need to move on and churches like this, as wonderful as they are, they are not here to be museums and not used. If they are not used they die. I think this is an innovative approach to a solution for the future. It is not perfect but as is often said: "A perfect plan is not always possible. What is worse, having no plan at all?" There is a plan it does require some adjustments. I think Ken Syvret, very eloquently put that over to you all. There is room for movement, change. This is a concept. I think it is a really exciting concept. I want to see this church continue to grow and not die like so many others have. When you have that opportunity, I would embrace the opportunity if you feel

you can and work with the officers of the church and find that compromise that Jenny spoke about; I think that could be a possibility. But I would urge to move forward and do not let this church wither away as so many others have because it might not be next year or in 10 years' time but further forward it will. I hope that helps, thank you. **[Approbation]**

Rev. I. Pallent:

We are going to move, quite soon, to a vote. So do I have any more pressing urgent questions or are people happy to go to a vote? Yes, can I judge the sense of that? Okay.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

We would like to take a final voting ...

Ms. P. Parkin:

Can you not postpone this vote?

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Pardon?

Ms. P. Parkin:

We are being asked to vote yes or no and, as Jenny eloquently put it, we are put in a situation ... sorry.

Mr. R. Le Breton:

We could, we can suspend the vote.

Ms. P. Parkin:

Patricia Parkin. I just feel we are being asked ... we are being forced into a vote where a lot of people cannot decide. Could we not postpone this? **[Attendees: No]** No?

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Okay, so, I am just going to explain the voting procedure. Apologies to all the people who are stood against the west wall, I am going to need to ask you all to move away from the west wall because that is where the vote is going to take place, apologies. Could I ask you to start moving away now? We are going to obviously conduct the vote by secret ballot. Those of you who came in and were given a voting slip, we are going to ask you to go behind the screen. There will be a ballot box, please cast your vote in the normal traditional way.

[02:15]

A vote of yes is a vote in favour of the motion, which I will read to you again: "If deemed appropriate authorise the Rectorat ou Bénéfice de la Paroisse de St. Ouen to do any and all things

in relation to the reordering required to give effect to the proposals including seeking an appropriate Faculty from the Ecclesiastical Court and submitting a planning application to the States of Jersey Planning Department each in relation to the detailed proposed reordering.” So, to reiterate a vote yes is a vote in favour of that and a vote no is a vote against.

Male Speaker:

Can you vote with a cross?

Mr. R. Le Breton:

Yes, a cross in the box. For those of you who are unable to move, for whatever reason, Michael also has a ballot box available. Once you have voted please feel free to leave. We will start the voting with the people at the back who are currently against the west wall because otherwise they are going to be trapped. Sorry, can I just have everyone’s attention for a minute? If you do want to stay we will be announcing the result of the vote tonight. So if you do want to stay please do but feel free to go once you have voted. Thank you.

[02:30]

Can I just check that everybody has voted who wants to vote because we are going to close the ballot box? If you have not voted please do so. Michael is at the back. If you have not voted anybody. Anybody over in there needing to vote still? No, everybody has voted. Okay, Michael, I think you can close the vote if you are ready. No more, that is it. Voting is closed.

[02:45]

Ladies and gentlemen, can I have your attention please? Thank you. The result this evening of the ballot is we had 3 spoilt papers, we had 86 yes votes, and 193 no votes. Can I thank you all for your attendance tonight? Thank you.