

A New Future for St Mary's Northop Hall?

Earlier in the year we sent out a survey to as many homes in Northop Hall as we could. We are really grateful for all the responses, which we have considered carefully. The full report including all comments can be seen on our website at www.northopchurch.org. It became clear to us that the building is important to many people in the village for many different reasons, and that there is a desire to see it used by the community. However it was also clear that there is no particular appetite for regular Sunday acts of worship.

Currently, the large majority of our time, effort and money is being put into running such services, and very little into other activities and this is clearly not sustainable. Therefore the congregation, together with the Vicar and Church in Wales authorities have made the difficult and sad decision to suspend regular acts of worship from 6th January 2019 - but we do so with great hope that this will free up resources to allow the church to be used for many other things. **THE CHURCH BUILDING IS NOT CLOSING OR BEING SOLD.**

St Mary's will be run by the local family of Anglican Churches in the Mold Mission Area, and, operating in some ways like a church hall, will continue to mark special occasions like Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance.

It will continue to be available for Baptisms, Funerals and wedding/relationship Blessings. (Weddings themselves will not be able to be legally certified in most circumstances.)

But we will also be particularly encouraging other uses. We have already had a number of successful gigs and concerts and at least 6 more are planned for 2019. We have been delighted to see increased use and interest by the school and community groups.

We are exploring adult education classes, a community library and garden and other ideas.

We would love everyone in the community to feel that the church building is available to them and for their activities, and for local people to come forward with ideas. We would also welcome volunteers to be on a steering group, and no religious affiliation is necessary, only a desire to see St Mary's be of service to the village.

The building has been made much more flexible, and basic toilet and refreshment facilities can be made available.

If you would like to get involved or have any ideas, please contact Rev Richard Hainsworth on 01352 840842 or stmarysnorthophall@gmail.com



Please turn over for news from Northop Churchyard

News from Northop Churchyard

We greatly value the important role that the churchyard plays in the life of the communities of Northop, Sychdyn and Northop Hall as a final resting place and a place of remembrance and commemoration.

You may be aware that the churchyard is becoming full, and we estimate that there are less than 10 new grave spaces available.

We have spent the past few years (and many thousands of pounds) trying to gain the necessary permissions to extend the burial ground into the neighbouring field. However groundwater surveys have demonstrated that the water table is only just below the surface and engineering works to permanently change this are not economically viable. We have been forced to conclude that our planning application to extend could not be successful under current law. Sadly this means that it is likely that in the course of 2019 the graveyard will become full for new graves, although burials in existing family plots can of course continue where there is capacity.



We are now submitting a new planning application to use the field for marked ashes burial plots only.

We deeply regret any distress that this may cause, and wanted to let the community know in time for wills and funeral instructions to be amended. Unfortunately grave spaces cannot be reserved in advance in any circumstances.

The main income of the churchyard is through burials, and this will inevitably now decrease. However we are hugely grateful for a recent legacy which will allow us to continue the current level of maintenance into the future. We would appreciate everyone's assistance in keeping the churchyard easy to maintain, including by not adding new features to graves, as outlined in the letter posted in the new part of the churchyard.

If you would like to discuss the implications of this situation, or would like any help in funeral planning, please contact the Vicar: Rev Richard Hainsworth, 01352 840842 or northopchurch@gmail.com

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