



St John's Church, Hartford Christ Church, Greenbank

www.stjohnshartford.org
www.christchurchgreenbank.org

From the Vicar, The Revd Mike Smith

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To all on the Electoral Roll of
St John's and Christ Church:

Building for the Future

Dear friends,

18 months have passed since we started planning our major project to rebuild the church hall and, secondly, undertake some refurbishment works in St John's. We are doing this for the same reason that our predecessors have done – to build for God's glory, to serve God's church and to reach God's world with the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are building for the future.



The architect's impression of the new hall with St John's in the background.

Many things have happened during that time which we see as the Lord's gracious hand upon us. Let me remind you of a few of them. The church family and PCC have been largely united in favour of doing these works – albeit with many views on the details! The church responded generously when we had our initial gift and pledge day in 2006.

A number of potentially serious obstacles have been overcome – the ownership of the land is now being transferred to us at a nominal sum, the parish council have been so helpful in their support, our neighbours have almost all been entirely supportive of the plans. Finally, and significantly, after an unusually long planning process, the borough council gave its unanimous approval for the plans just a couple of weeks ago.

It is this last move which means we can now go ahead and rebuild the church hall. **This is the bottom line: once we have the funds in place, we can start building.**

When we originally launched the project, we anticipated that there would be a second pledge and gift day this year. **This will be on Palm Sunday, 16 March.** A response form is enclosed. There will be presentations at the 10am and 6.30pm services at St John's on 2 and 9 March, and also at the 8am service and at Christ Church on 9 March. Please come, please pray, please respond as the Lord enables.

Let me say a little about the finances – David Richards, our project treasurer, would be very happy to explain further if you wish. The total cost of the project has increased – time has passed, and the plans have been changed through both local consultation and the planners' requirements. The cost is likely to be around £1 million rather than £800,000. We still intend, in faith, to give generously to a Christian project in the developing world. The total amount currently available to start the project is around £420,000. This includes some interest-free loans from church members. Additionally, £120,000 is coming in over five years from those who are already giving regularly. We have come a long way – for which we are thankful to the Lord. But we still have a long way to go – for which we need to seek his grace, the grace of giving.

I can assure you that we are vigorously seeking external grants, but the reality is that most will not give to "religious" projects. But we do not despair. The Lord calls and enables his people to give for his work, and that is the only way this project will become a reality. As we look to him and to the future, we aim to keep you up to date with a quarterly project newsletter. Finally, can I encourage you to make every effort to come to a special **prayer meeting** for the project on Thursday 13 March, 8pm in the Church Centre?

*Yours sincerely in Christ,
Mike*