

## Different Seating – December 2017

At the September PCC meeting, the PCC approved a 6 month trial period of a different arrangement in seating. A temporary (18 month) faculty has now been obtained, with the proviso that all pews remain in church, and the wooden chairs are in a parishioner's garage. During the summer we will be asking for your views on what is the best way to meet the wide variety of needs in the church and how we use our limited space best to worship God.

This paper outlines the background and five separate proposals that were presented to the PCC. Please refer to the two diagrams at the end of the paper; the first shows the present layout with pews numbered, and the second shows the layout for the trial period incorporating all of these proposals.

### **Background Issues**

At family service, social events, and baptisms the area around the font is crowded and there is not much space for people to either mingle (for the first two) or to gather around (for the third option) and various informal discussions have taken place with various individuals. Concern has also been raised that the very first pew at the front of the nave is not used, and space is very limited when people are taking communion and those who require walkers, wheelchairs, assistance, or have pushchairs/prams cannot get around easily especially if someone is at the rail in-front of them taking communion.

In addition, when the 9:30 service was reviewed, concern was expressed of the loss of the prayer area at the front of the north aisle and a new prayer area is being created which will be established for use all the time.

All pews are restored in memory of individuals or on behalf of families and for the pews affected all reasonable efforts will be taken to speak to the individuals concerned to explain why and where their pew will be moved.

### **Proposal 1: In the Nave remove the front two pews and replace them with pew fronts.**

#### *Reasons:*

- a) This will enable more space for people taking communion – at the moment very difficult and could pose a trip risk
- b) People with wheelchairs / pushchairs will easily be able to get around
- c) More room to move the nave altar (needs to be moved for weddings and funerals) which will make it easier. Improves our volunteer safety in respect of manual handling.
- d) No need to move lectern meaning no trip hazard presented or stretching of the microphone cable. Improves our volunteer safety in respect of manual handling.

#### *Details*

The pews are numbered 1 and 2 in the diagram and will be used in another proposal. There are pew fronts in church which are currently just being stored and not being used as they were intended. These will need to be cut to size and will need to be screwed down, however this should all be possible by our congregation / friends of congregation.

### **Proposal 2: In the South Aisle rearrange seating and create a prayer area.**

#### *Reasons*

- a) To create a separate prayer space which can be used at all times including when the band is setting up / playing
- b) To allow all pews to be retained.

### *Details*

The majority of the chairs will be removed (An offsite storage location has been identified for the 6 month experiment period). Use 4-6 of the wooden chairs to create a prayer area at the back of the aisle in front of the cleaning cupboard (door will still be able to be opened). Prayer area to consist of prayer options for both adults and children which will be stored easily in church. Prayer area will consist of prayer tree and cross (already existing). Prayer area can be used for prayer ministry with purchase of foldable screen (will be stored away when not in use in the prayer area). Prayer area can be removed to add extra chairs in for school services and Christmas services.

Move pews from other proposals into these locations. Put pew 1 against the wall and pew 2 in front of it. Put pew 27 against the wall next to pew 1. – Make sure memorial plaques are still visible which may mean moving them to the other end. Put pew 24 in front of pew 27 but with a gap between it and pew 2. Visibility from the pews would be the same or greater than from the chairs in current location.

The prayer board would remain in its current location as this area is used for Morning Prayer on Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

### **Proposal 3: Create more space at back of church**

#### *Reasons:*

- a) To allow more space for people to congregate around the font for baptisms
- b) To allow more space for people socialising over refreshments when they are served at the back of church
- c) To provide an opportunity for small group space.
- d) Allow more room for activities such as Heritage Open Days

#### *Details*

Remove pews 23 and 24. Move pews 25 and 26 to the place where pews 23 and 24 were (this is because pews 25 and 26 have correct pew backs whereas pews 23 and 24 are configured to have another pew behind them. A few of the wooden chairs (from proposal 4) will be stored next to the wall, so they can be used for people to sit on as required for events such as baptisms and then turned around for services where there are large congregations.

### **Proposal 4: Move pew 27 (in front of the vergers pew) to side aisle as detailed above**

#### *Reasons*

- a) This will give more area around the back of the church. (see proposal 3)
- b) Prevent the pew being used as a dumping ground
- c) The hassocks which are currently stored under the pew will be sold / given away.

### **Proposal 5: Removing items which are no longer used**

There are a variety of service, prayer and hymn books which we no longer use at St. Michael's for various reasons. A small sample of each of these will be retained for historic reasons. Berkshire Record Office will also be consulted as to whether they wish to keep any. The hassocks which are not required (stacked up under a pew) will also be offered for sale as they are surplus to requirements.

Current Church Layout – “Artistic” licence has been used

Proposed – “Artistic” licence has been used. One pew to be sold.

