

"Enlarge the place of your tent,  
stretch your tent curtains wide,  
do not hold back;  
lengthen your cords,  
strengthen your stakes."

*Isaiah Chapter 54:2*

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,  
and all these things will be added to you."

*Matthew 6:33*

"The Light shines in the darkness  
and the darkness did not overcome it."

*John 1:5*

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see  
your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

*Matthew 5:16*



## Introduction

Once in a generation an opportunity comes for us to step out in faith, and take on a big vision for how God might grow his people in this place. Over the years, the people of St Mary's have stepped up to the plate - they thought of the subsequent generation of Christians and have added to our church buildings, believing that God would send the increase.

### *Now it is our turn!*

The Beacon Project is our response to the growing needs of St Mary's, but more importantly to the needs of the community in which we are placed. It is strategic in the fulfilment of our vision to Transform Ferndown with Jesus. After over 14 years of prayer, planning, giving and dreaming it is now within our reach! What an exciting time to be a part of St Mary's!



## Building on a legacy of growth

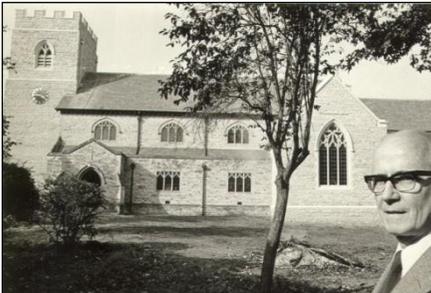
Looking back, it is easy to see that the history of St Mary's is one of constant growth in the church family and the church buildings. In each decade there have been building works, or plans for such works, to make sure we have spaces for worship, and the right facilities and atmosphere for other activities and ministries. Those who provided the site and original buildings for St Mary's have given us a wonderful opportunity to expand our facilities, as we are blessed with space.



*Laying of the foundation stone in 1933*



*St Mary's in 1934 with the nave and porches built*



*St Mary's in the 1970s with the chancel, transepts and tower all built*



*Aerial view taken in 2009 showing the church & hall complex*

## Where are we at?

For those of you who are relatively new to St Mary's and haven't seen the whole history of the project to date, here is a summary:

The vision for a building project was first explored by former Rector, Rev. Canon Dick Luther. He envisaged a church lounge connecting the hall and church buildings to create a united church site and a place for the congregations to gather after services. "The Enhancement Project" was launched in **1999** and fundraising began. Due to various set-backs the project had to be put on hold but the project team continued to meet and pray into the way forward.

In the **mid-"noughties"** the project was reviewed in light of growing congregations and church activities. Etchingam Morris Architects were appointed and the designs were greatly revised. In response to the change in the church's situation a more ambitious project including a café area, hall foyer space and enhanced side rooms was developed.

The project was re-launched as "The Beacon Project" in **2010**.

Following church and community consultation meetings and numerous project team meetings the designs were revised and refined over the period **2010-2013** and last summer full planning permission was obtained from East Dorset District Council.

Fundraising through grant applications and events picked up pace and we have been awarded x4 grants (£50,000 from the Talbot Village Trust and £10,000 each from The Erskine Muton Trust, The All Churches Trust and The Beatrice Laing Trust)

Throughout **2013 -2014** various contractors have been appointed to undertake the detailed specifications for the project. Last month, DBK (our quantity surveyors) produced an updated tender document with a detailed breakdown of costs provided by three construction companies.

## What's it all about?

Sometimes when a vision takes a long time to come to fruition we can lose sight of it along the way, just as the Israelites lost sight of the promised land as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Those 'wilderness years' can prove to be a dangerous time, as we see from the Israelite experience – they lost faith, they lost hope and at times they lost sight of God, giving way to grumbling, criticism and idolatry.

I want us to look again (or for the first time) at the beautiful vision that God has given us for the Beacon Project, and ask you to begin to visualise with me the different ways in which it might be used, for the glory of God, to the benefit of his people and for the blessing of the whole community where God has placed us.

### *Not just bricks and mortar*

This project is not about a building - it is much wider than that. Traditionally, a beacon was used to give light and to communicate a message. Over the years, God has spoken prophetically to members of this church about the light and glory of God shining from St Mary's. That's why the Beacon Project was so named.



God shines his light and communicates his message through his people. Jesus said, *'You are the light of the World' (Matthew 5: 14)*. Paul writes that we should *'shine as stars' (Philippians 2:15b)* and tells the Corinthians that they have *"treasure in jars of clay" (2 Cor. 4:7)*. God has chosen to use us to communicate his love to the world around. We are the Body of Christ – now that Jesus has returned to the Father, and sent the Holy Spirit, he uses us to carry out his Kingdom work: preaching the Good News, proclaiming freedom, healing the sick. We embody the Good News - What a wonderful responsibility!

As I wrote in this month's "Spotlight" newsletter, I believe that God is wanting to train, equip and prepare us to be more effective carriers of the Kingdom – that's what this term's sermon series is all about. As we experience and understand more of the love of God for us, so we are transformed, motivated and moved to share that love with others.

As we receive our Father's welcome, so we are able to extend that welcome to others. As we know ourselves invited to a wonderful banquet of God's love, purely through his grace, so we can extend gracious hospitality to others.



**The Beacon is going to help us to love.**

A couple of years ago, a word was given by a member of the PCC that we (the people) are the Beacon – that is absolutely right....but we need a place to shine our light from.

*"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5: 14-16)*

The Beacon building will give us a place to be able to shine the light of Christ and operate from more effectively. It will be a place that will be equipped to help us minister to the particular needs of our church and community.



I long for The Beacon to become the loving heart of Ferndown. It will be a non-threatening place where people can come and know that they will be loved and listened to. It will be a non-judgemental place – a place of reaching out with love to those that are different to us.

It will be "Love Ferndown" becoming a day-by-day reality instead of an outreach project that we run every few years.

It will be there for people of all ages. My prayer is that it will go some way in addressing the terrible problems of loneliness experienced by many in our community – that it will be a home for the lonely, the lost and the hurting. There will always be someone who will talk and pray with you, if that is what you would like.



It will be a place where young people are welcomed. It will help us to strengthen links with our schools (who have told us how much they would welcome such a place).

There is someone in our congregation who has a real heart for young offenders or those that are in danger of dropping out of school, and would love to run a group there which will provide them with help, a listening ear and practical skills.

**For everyone it will be somewhere safe, a place to "just be" ...and encounter God.**

It will be a place of prayer – where prayer happens as naturally and easily as breathing. A place where we pray for anyone who wants it – asking the Lord to bring healing and wholeness for those who are emotionally or physically in pain. A place of intercession where we can bring the needs of our Church and community to Jesus.



It will be a place of Kingdom appointments, where people feel drawn to come in and will find Jesus there. A place where we stop for the one because each and every one is precious to God.



As well as serving the community, the Beacon will be a blessing to us. It will provide us with extra accommodation for meetings, socials and Sunday coffee

times. It will enable the growth of our church. It will help enormously with Breakfast Church which is often bursting at the seams in the hall. If we can serve breakfast in the Beacon we will have significantly more space in the hall to accommodate the congregation. We also hope that it will be a resource for other churches to use for Alpha away days, guest events, and other meetings.

Its transparent design means that it will provide a window to the world to see what 'those Christians' get up to, how they live, how they are different. It will give us a place to shine the light of Christ.



I hope that as you have read this you begin to sense the possibilities and have a growing excitement at what the Beacon will mean for Ferndown! It will be a key component in fulfilling our vision of Transforming Ferndown with Jesus.

In addition, 10% of all giving to the project since last Summer (unless otherwise requested) has been tithed to bless Stephen Bell with European Christian Mission in The Balkans and Simon & Sue Morgan on full time mission in Uganda. It is wonderful to be able to bless others abroad as well as those in Ferndown with this project.

## **Thank You!**

May I take this opportunity to say a heart-felt thank you to each and every one of you for your prayers and gifts to the project to date. Your support has enabled the huge amount of work behind the scenes which has brought us to this exciting point where the vision is on the verge of becoming a transformational reality. Thank you for your continued faithfulness, generosity and commitment - it is a great source of encouragement as we continue on this long journey to our own Promised Land. But the destination is now in view - praise the Lord!

## The Vision and The Challenge

God has been challenging me recently about my commitment to this incredible vision.

It is one thing to say: 'Transforming Ferndown with Jesus – what a great idea. We want God's kingdom to come in Ferndown, we want to see people come to know Jesus'. I guess all of us would say those things...It is completely different to say: 'We absolutely must see Ferndown transformed with Jesus – it is unacceptable for things to stay as they are with thousands not knowing His love for them and continuing through life without the hope that he brings. This is what God has called us to. Nothing will stand in our way!'

In response to this imperative, which the leadership team believe God has given us as His church, we have prayerfully discussed the project and decided that we should build Phases 1 and 2 together, as well as undertaking some landscaping of the grounds.

**Phase 1** will see the building of the hall foyer, new office area and youth room and the installation of a new boiler plant. A new pathway connecting the church grounds to the Tesco car park will also be laid.

**Phase 2** will see the building of the church foyer, connecting the church and hall foyers together and providing the café and lounge area. The rest of the landscaping work will also be undertaken in this phase.

Phase 3, which involved the extension of our side rooms (Venues 1 & 2), will not be included at this time as the additional space provided by the new hall and church foyers will be sufficient for our needs going forward.

The PCC have therefore agreed that the project will either go ahead with Phases 1 & 2 being built together or we will not proceed until we are in a position to so.

This is a big challenge! What am I willing to give? What am I willing to do in order to make it happen? How about you?

## So what happens next?

We now have a couple of months in order to decide how to proceed with the Beacon Project, before the tenders are no longer valid.

We want to press on with the build. We currently have £550,000 that has been raised through the sale of a church property plus funds generously given by you as well as from grants and a £50,000 loan from The Talbot Village Trust.

I have asked Stuart Laybourne, our Project Manager, to accurately and meticulously calculate the total cost of the project, so that there are no hidden extras, and so that you know exactly what is required. Based on Phases 1 and 2 being built together we are looking at a total cost of approximately £1,022,000, which includes all of the following:

- Construction of Phases 1 and 2
- All furnishings and fittings
- Landscaping
- All fees and contingencies
- VAT

This means that we still need to find £472,000. A substantial sum of money! Well, we have been learning about our God of the impossible!

We are, of course, also mindful of the ongoing running costs of the new building but having visited similar projects we are confident that the funds generated by the running of the café as well as additional regular giving as a result of church growth will more than cover these additional costs.

The PCC are showing their commitment to the Beacon in the different fundraising activities that they have been undertaking through the year. I have also asked them to give first. **But it is not enough for the leadership to be on board – this is a whole church project, and we all need to be behind it, if it is to succeed.**

Now I am asking you to prayerfully consider what God is asking you to give to make this project happen. I began by talking about the faithfulness of preceding generations. Now it is our turn.

*This will be our gift of a lifetime.*



## How to give

Firstly, please take some time to pray. As a church we seek God's will in all things and I warmly encourage you to dedicate some time to pray about The Beacon Project, seeking God's will for the project and for you as a member of His church family here at St Mary's.

There are numerous ways in which you can give:

1. By a one-off donation \*\*
2. Regularly by bank standing order \*\*
3. Regularly by giving envelope \*\*
4. Through Stewardship Services, Charities Aid Foundation Giving, and other similar schemes
5. Through your employer's payroll giving scheme (if they choose to operate such a scheme)
6. In the form of quoted shares and certain other securities (this entitles you to tax relief – please speak to your financial adviser)

**\*\* If you pay UK tax (Income or Capital Gains tax) and would like us to be able to claim back the basic rate tax, please complete the form enclosed. This benefits St Mary's in that we can recover 25p of tax for each pound you give). Please note that if you have already completed a Gift Aid Declaration for St Mary's you do not have to complete another one.**

## How to give (continued)

When you have decided about your giving please complete your "Gift of a Lifetime" form enclosed and put it in the envelope provided. In order to help us produce accurate figures going forward please do not include in your total any past gifts or pledges, please just let us know what you are intending to give going forward.

## When to give

We will have a **Beacon Gift Day on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September** after which the PCC will then meet to consider the response and to make a decision about how we proceed. It would be really helpful if you can return your "Gift of a Lifetime" envelope before or on this Sunday so that we can collate all the responses for the PCC to discuss at the beginning of October.

## Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet and for all your faithful prayer and support to date. If you have any queries please feel free to speak to myself, Tracey or any member of the Beacon Team and we will be happy to help.

We are on the cusp of an exciting new chapter at St Mary's - I pray that you will join me in seeking the Lord's will for us all as we commit ourselves afresh to glorifying His name and transforming Ferndown with Jesus.

Love in Christ



Rev. Sarah Pix