

Norton Community Trust

Newsletter No3

February 2020

Hello everybody!

As we expected, progress on the adaption of the St Andrews church building has been slow! This is much as expected - there are many legal issues and protocols to go through at this early stage of the project. But in this third Newsletter, we just wanted to let our members know what news there is and to reassure everyone that the project is moving ahead.

Christmas seems a long time ago now, but a big thankyou to everyone who came along to the Christmas Craft Fayre back in December. A very enjoyable day, and we raised £530 for the adaption project - a fabulous effort by our fundraising team.

The Church in Wales continues to proceed with the redundancy process for St Andrews which hopefully should be completed shortly. In the meantime, the Church building is now officially closed and is no longer available for events. And we have ironed out with the Church Representative Body all the remaining key issues for the draft agreement that will allow the Trust to lease and adapt the building.

Our request for permission to install water/sewerage services through the churchyard has been endorsed and is just waiting for formal approval. The planning application for the proposed work has been submitted, together with a change of use application and we expect feedback from Powys County Council in March or April. Presteigne and Norton Town Council have expressed their support for the application, and indeed for the project as a whole, and have provided us with some additional grant funding for start-up costs during 2020. Our huge thanks to the Town Council for this.

As part of the planning process, a bat survey of the church was completed by Teme Ecology in December. The survey found no evidence of roosting bats within the area of proposed work including the clock tower. No further ecological constraints were identified.

We've taken further advice on the Trust's application for charitable status and are finalising an amended application that should have a better chance of success - to be submitted imminently.

The community working group continues to address each of these issues and we remain hopeful that we can start implementing the adaption plans by mid-2020. We also haven't forgotten that many of you pointed out one of the crucial issues for the new facility will be parking - we are working on this and have already come up with some short-term solutions.

Meanwhile, please do keep feeding through any ideas you have for fundraising. We will shortly let you have details of the photographic competition leading to a Norton calendar for 2021. So save all your photos of our wonderful village and countryside one of them could be a winner! We would also love to hear any other ideas you have for raising funds for the adaption project, particularly events which can involve the whole community. Please send any contributions and ideas to **Chris Refausse (crefausse@live.co.uk)**

We hope that's given you a flavour of what we've been up to. We will keep you updated on progress via this email newsletter - but in the meantime if you have any questions or thoughts please do get in touch.

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