



What's in a name? As we prepare to launch our fundraising events in the community, we felt that we needed a more suitable external name for the Building for Mission (BFM) project. We wanted something that conveyed the essence of what we were trying to achieve, but in more general terms that the wider community could relate to. After some deliberation, we decided on “St. Thomas Church Lancaster Heart of the City Project” (the overlap with the St. Thomas’ headline of “Sharing God’s love from the heart of the city” will not go unnoticed by many of you). We will be updating the BFM web page and publishing a “St. Thomas Church Lancaster Heart of the City” Facebook page using the new community name. We will also produce invitations, posters and handout templates with the new banner, above, for you to use in your fundraising initiatives.

Boiler repairs: the new boilers are now in and working, after a delay caused by having to replace the gas supply pipe between the Church Centre and the Church boiler room. The total cost of the project was £24,363.58 (ex VAT). Because of generous extra giving into the Church’s general fund this year, we have been able to pay for this from our annual budget rather than from the BFM fund.

Spire: PCC has agreed to accept a tender, subject to approval by the Diocese, for the work to begin at the beginning of March 2018. The project, likely to take up to 12 weeks, involves taking down and re-fixing the top of the spire, installing a new finial at the top, re-grouting most of the tower and spire, and installing pigeon-proof barriers on the windows. Our aim is to minimise disturbance to activities in church, and to access around the site, while the work is under way.

Garden clearance: our own Ground-Force team has cleared the overgrown bushes from the car park ramp area, the garden beside the Church Centre, and the garden area towards the front of Church, in order to open up those spaces, and make the grounds safer and more attractive and welcoming.

Strategy: The BFM Team is now in a better position to move forward in preparing realistic plans for the building project, informed by new information from the professional surveys (mechanical, electrical, structural) of all our buildings, and updated information from the BFM Finance Team. Headline news from the surveys - the Church itself needs more investment and the Centre is in a better condition structurally than we originally thought.

The Finance Team has worked hard to produce reasonable estimates of the total amount of money we are likely to raise from different sources, and this “funding envelope” will help us to scope and scale the project.

In the light of this new and updated information, the BFM Team and PCC have reviewed the strategic priorities of the BFM project, taking into account feedback received and further reflection on things that would be nice to have but are not essential to the strategic priorities. The outcome is an agreement to focus on 3 strategic priorities: building to sustain the current life and activities of the Church; building for the growth of the Church; and building to bless and serve those in need. The need to make spaces as flexible as possible, in order to keep options open for the future, was also agreed. Given inevitable pressure on ground-floor space, activities like a Christian bookshop, a commercial cafe, and an Adult ‘Changing Places’ Toilet were deemed nice to have but not essential.

PCC have agreed to ask Dan Brown (our project architect) to update the costings for the proposed new-build Centre, and draw up new costed plans to fully remodel and extend the existing Centre, both at projected 2019 prices, to allow direct comparisons between the two possible schemes. No decisions have yet been taken on the preferred way forward given the survey results and funding envelope; any decisions on this will be based on prayer, due diligence, cost effectiveness and strategic reflection.

Pledges: thank you to those of you who are already supporting the Heart of the City/BFM project. As at the end of September, the amount raised had grown to £446,826. Against this, we have also received two Gift Aid payments, which means we now have over £500,000 in the bank account. This is a remarkable achievement and our thanks to those of you who have contributed to date.

Fundraising: this autumn our schedule of fundraising activities will begin. Jess Walmsley is inviting you to join her on the evening of either Thursday 2nd November or Wednesday 14th November, to discuss any ideas or suggestions that you might have on fundraising in the community. She will be sharing more information on this very soon, but for the time being please make a note of the dates in your diaries. At this stage, Jess is only seeking your ideas, not commitment.

Communications: Karen Shackleton is continuing to build a series of ‘personal stories’ which demonstrate the huge impact that St. Tees already has in the community. These will be used to help with fundraising and grant applications. They do not need to be specifically faith-related; for example, they could involve one of the existing community groups using our buildings during the week. If you have a powerful story that you would be willing to share, please contact Karen Shackleton or Tim Parsons, the project manager. Thank you for the suggestions offered so far.