

Express Buzz

Beeston's parish church prepares for the future *by the Editor*

TIME changes things and, whilst a parish church has stood steadfastly at the heart of Beeston for more than 700 years, the needs of Beeston's parishioners have shifted like sand as the years have passed.

The Victorians rebuilt much of the medieval church that stood on the site 164 years ago into the structure we see today. However, although the church building has served Beeston's parishioners well since the 1844 rebuild, the clergy and congregation decided the time was right for a reordering of the church interior; one more in tune with the populace of 21st century Beeston.

Catalyst to change was the arson attack in 2005 that destroyed the church hall, a soulless and utilitarian building next door to the church. Its loss forced immediate decision-taking as to whether a new church hall should be built on the site, or the site sold for development and thus providing where-with-all to create something

more fitting for the needs of not only church-goers, but the whole community.

Now, after more than two years of planning, disorder and displacement, the congregation of St John the Baptist is finally ready to officially open the west doors of the reordered building to the public at large.

Festival Weekend

A festival is planned for the weekend of June 20 - 21.

Themed as 'A Building for the Whole Community', the festival starts on Friday evening with a visit from Steve Price, a gospel illusionist. The show will take place at the reordered entrance to the chancel, a versatile dais that delivers the essential focal point for worship in the church, but now combines this role with a facility for community shows, school plays and concerts.

On Saturday, June 21, a garden party will be held in the church grounds between

10am and 4pm. The church will be open so that visitors can have a look at the awesome transformation that has taken place within its walls: the 13thC font in its new and innovative setting greets everyone who comes into the church, the restored ceiling soaring magnificently above, replacement of the dark Victorian pews with lighter-coloured seating and revealing ethereal space, cleaned stonework exposing much more than the original colour of the church's imposing pillars and arches; visitors unfamiliar with the church should ask to look at the reredos, an ornately carved screen behind the High Altar that depicts the Last Supper.

Refreshments will be available all day – thanks to the inclusion of modern kitchen facilities at the rear of the church.

The Vicar of Beeston, Rev Wayne Plimmer, said: "It has been an enormous privilege

to have been alongside the people of St John's as the restoration and redevelopment has progressed. Everyone has worked tremendously hard to turn our vision into reality. We hope that as the months go by we will be able to make our parish church a building where the whole community feel at home. There is an enormous amount of affection for the church building and I believe that we now have a bright, clean and more welcoming environment, which is better equipped to face the future and to be of service to the community."

The Bishop of Sherwood, the Right Rev Anthony Porter, has been invited to celebrate the Parish Eucharist at 10am on Sunday, June 22. Later in the day, a special Service of Thanksgiving for the restoration and renewal of the church will begin at 3pm, to which all those who have been in any way associated with the project in any capacity are invited.

Snippets

Wollaton Road Coffee Morning

A COFFEE morning and church fair will be held at Wollaton Road Methodist Church, Beeston on Saturday, June 7 from 10am to noon.

Stalls will include cakes, tombola, books, groceries, toiletries and crafts. All proceeds will go towards the Grace Project to provide a children's worker for the church.

Chilwell Road May Market

THE plant stall at Chilwell Road Methodist Church's May Market, held on May 31, was one of many that helped to raise almost £450 for the church's chosen charity this year, Lincs and Notts Air Ambulance.

Two O'clock Club raises funds for children's hospice

Following fundraising by club members, Caroline Hoare was invited to the May meeting of the Two O'clock Club to accept a cheque for £650 on behalf of the Rainbows Children's Hospice, Loughborough.

The presentation by club chairman Reg Goodman was followed by a talk and slide show by Brian and Doreen Charlton, members of the Derby link of Chernobyl Children Lifeline.

Children from Belarus, affected by fallout from the Russian nuclear plant, are able to visit the UK thanks to the work of the Chernobyl Children Lifeline. Describing the horrific manner in which the children have been affected, Brian went on to explain how children from selected families were able to spend a month in the UK with host families, all organised by Lifeline.

A sale of cakes and cards after Mr and Mrs Charlton's talk raised £64.80 towards the charity fund.

Beeston High Road improvements

FOLLOWING a recent presentation of proposals to give Beeston's High Road a facelift, representatives of Broxtowe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council are giving people another chance to comment.

People will now be able to have a look at the proposals at Beeston Library on Foster Avenue, which will host a display until June 13.

Chris Timson, a local businessman and Chair of the Beeston Business Forum, said: "Although people may feel that the High Road isn't in desperate need of improvements, we need to think about what other towns around us are doing. If Beeston doesn't keep up with its competitors, many of whom have already carried out works to improve their town centres, shoppers and business investors are likely to go elsewhere."

For more information about the High Road Improvements, please contact Broxtowe Borough Council's Economic Development team on (0115) 917 7777.

Between you and me...

BROXTOWE MP Nick Palmer writes his monthly column for the Beeston Express to keep us, his constituents, up-to-date and informed. We would like to remind you, however, that the views he expresses are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of The Beeston Express. If you would like to comment on any of the issues he raises, please write to the address on page 2.

The Beeston Express has no allegiance to any political party.

The winds of (opinion) change

A FEW years ago, a constituent wrote to me to urge me to 'stand firm' against 'loony environmentalists' who 'wanted to ruin our economy' by switching from oil and gas to renewable energy sources like wind and wave power. He argued that there was plenty of oil out there, and it just needed to be discovered as in every previous generation.

At the time, it was definitely true that renewable energy was much more expensive than energy from oil or gas. After the huge price rises of recent months, that is no longer true: onshore wind power is now cheaper than electricity generated by oil (even after allowing for the fact that the wind doesn't blow all the time), and the gap is likely to widen as world oil supplies diminish.

There are other arguments against wind turbines (primarily that some people don't like the look of them in the open hilly locations where they are most effective) but the economic argument has gone with the wind.

And that's not the only thing that's changing. The argument that we should close all nuclear power plants and accept greater short-term dependence on imported gas looks harder to sustain. Locally, for all we may disagree about the tram route, the case for investing in the tram is strengthened now that car use is getting more expensive every week. And at the global level, all those business executives who thought it was smart to locate their production (because transport costs were negligible) are now having to

rethink. If oil reaches \$200/barrel, as some think likely, it becomes cheaper to produce manufactured goods for the British market in Britain rather than China, even given the higher wages here.

The political system is, in my opinion, not good at coping with this sort of rapid change in attitudes. Political parties develop policies over a long period, based on what people are telling them they want, with a reality check at an election which is never more than five years away. If the facts change and people change their minds, our political climate punishes politicians who change with them. "It's a humiliating U-turn!" "They said something very different in 1997!" "Why didn't you change the policy before?"

The reality about energy is that successive governments

have been planning for gradual change for a long time – that's why there are already a lot of wind farms around and why the Severn Estuary tidal power project looks as though it will go ahead – but the soaring oil price is forcing us to go faster.

It is a good sign, not an embarrassment, if politicians change policies when there's a new element in the equation. As a bishop once said to a journalist who accused him of inconsistency, "When the known facts change, I change my mind. What do you do?" But what we really need from politicians is the ability to anticipate change and make the case for action before the public is convinced.

We are still at that point about climate change. The consensus among scientists and politicians is now

overwhelming: if international agreement for severe cuts in carbon emissions isn't reached soon, we are signing the death warrant of a great many people in coming generations. The public isn't, by and large, yet convinced it's that serious, or that Britain can do much if it is.

So let me say something unpopular. I accept that we can only make a real difference if it's part of a global agreement. But if we can get a global agreement, we need to be prepared to take drastic steps to reduce carbon emissions from buildings and cars, even though it is going to be expensive and inconvenient. We might not agree now, but politicians who only agree with current opinion are not, in the last resort, doing their job.

