

Draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme

This Scheme is made by the Church Commissioners (“the Commissioners”) this day of 20.... under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

Background

By a Scheme of the Commissioners made under the said Measure on the 22nd day of March 2016 the parish church of Saint Stephen (“the building”) in the former parish of Saint Stephen, Hammerwood in the Diocese of Chichester was declared closed for regular public worship.

NOW, it is provided as follows:-

Future of the church building and part of the annexed land

1. The building and that part of the land annexed or belonging thereto shown hatched and cross-hatched on the annexed plan (together referred to as “the property”) shall be appropriated to use for cultural, social and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship in accordance with the rites and customs of any Christian body designated by the Bishop for the time being of Chichester and for purposes ancillary thereto together with the rights granted by Schedule 1 and subject to the rights reserved by Schedule 2.

Disposal

2. The Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance (“the Board”) is hereby empowered to lease the property for any or all of the said uses together with the benefit of the rights granted by schedule 1 and subject to the rights reserved by Schedule 2.

Contents

3. The contents of the building shall be disposed of as the Bishop shall direct subject, so far as it is required, to listed building consent being granted.

Coming into operation of this Scheme

4. This Scheme shall not come into operation until such date or dates as the Commissioners shall determine following the making of this Scheme and different provisions of the Scheme may be brought into operation on different dates and the Commissioners shall not be obliged to bring the Scheme or any part thereof into operation until such time as they are satisfied that the conditions specified in Schedule 3 have been complied with but may do so if they so determine.

In witness of which this Scheme has been duly executed as a deed by the Church Commissioners.

Executed as a Deed by the Church Commissioners for England
acting by two authorised signatories:

Signature of Authorised Signatory

Signature of Authorised Signatory

Schedule 1: Grant of Rights of Way

To enable the property to be used for the purposes specified in the Scheme, the following rights shall vest in the Board for the benefit of the property –

- (i) the right (upon reasonable prior notice in writing to the parochial church council of the parish in which the property is for the time being situated) to enter with or without vehicles, equipment and apparatus upon such parts of the said churchyard as may be necessary for the purpose of inspecting, repairing and maintaining the building and for the purpose of laying, connecting into, inspecting, repairing, maintaining or renewing the services subject to the person exercising such right causing as little damage as possible to the said churchyard or any graves, tombstones, monuments and memorials therein, and subject to the Board and its' successors in title making good any damage so caused to the reasonable satisfaction of the said parochial church council or other the person for the time being responsible for the care and maintenance of the said churchyard and subject to the grant of any necessary faculties by the Consistory Court to authorise the said works; and
- (ii) all rights and easements over land other than the said churchyard appertaining or reputed to appertain to the property (in common with all others entitled to the like rights).

Schedule 2: Reservation of Rights of Way

To enable the remaining part of the said churchyard to continue in use as a burial ground the right to pass and repass over the cross-hatched land with or without vehicles required in connection with the use and maintenance of the said burial ground shall be reserved to the incumbent for the time being of the benefice of Forest Row and all persons lawfully visiting the said burial ground.

Schedule 3: Conditions

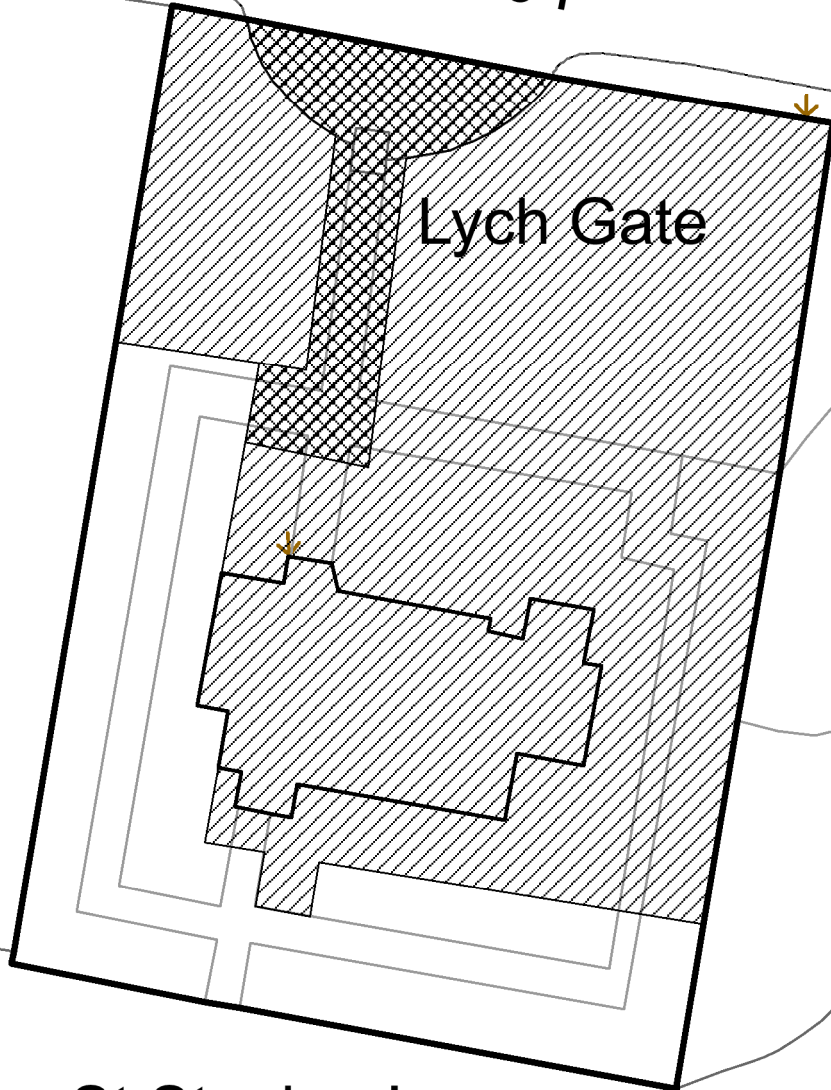
- (i) That the intended recipients of the property are financially able to implement the proposed uses.
- (ii) That the terms of the lease have been approved by the Commissioners.

HAMMERWOOD ST STEPHEN



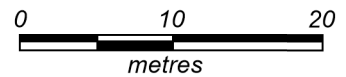
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Lych Gate

St Stephen's
Church



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**EXPLANATORY NOTE
MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011
DRAFT PASTORAL (CHURCH BUILDINGS DISPOSAL) SCHEME
HAMMERWOOD ST STEPHEN
DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER**

This note accompanies a draft scheme under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 which makes provision for the future of a closed church building, The Church Commissioners provide this information so that individuals and interested parties can understand the background to the proposals, make a reasoned judgement on the merits of the draft scheme and, if they see fit, a reasoned expression of support or objection to it.

The Current Proposals

The Commissioners have agreed to publish a draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme providing for the Diocese of Chichester to lease the closed church of Hammerwood St Stephen and part of the churchyard for use for social, cultural and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship by any Christian body designated by the Bishop of Chichester. It is proposed to lease the church to a newly created charity called the St Stephen's Trust CIO established by a neighbouring landowner. It is envisaged to use the building for activities including concerts, recitals, meetings, exhibitions, craft fairs, fundraising and community events & occasional Christian worship.

Background

St Stephen, Hammerwood was formally closed for regular public worship with effect from 1 April 2016. In September 2016 its listing was upgraded from II to II*. At that time the churchyard walls and lychgate were also listed Grade II. Closure of the church was requested by the parish as the Parochial Church Council had found the building to be too much of a burden for its small and dwindling congregation, there being no longer the finances or energy necessary to keep the church going.

Following closure, the building was placed on the market by Clifford Dann Chartered Surveyors on an offers-invited basis from December 2017 to June 2018. This produced a variety of proposals for the re-use of the church. Following pre-application discussions with Wealden District Council and Historic England, the current proposal was selected as offering the most suitable future use for the church.

The Building

St Stephen's was built in 1879-80 by Oswald Smith of Hammerwood Park to the designs of Edgar Philip Loftus Brock on a newly acquired site. It stands within a square churchyard on the south side of the A264 approximately four miles east of East Grinstead and ten miles west of Royal Tunbridge Wells in a scattered rural community.

The church is an attractive quite typical Gothic-revival church in the Decorated style, vertical emphasis being provided by its tall, 100ft spire. It consists of a nave with south aisle and north and south porches, a chancel with north vestry and south-east tower with spire. It is constructed of sandstone with Bathstone dressings and diagonal bands and chequered flintwork. The roofs are covered with clay tiles. The fixtures and fittings are contemporary with the building and many windows contain stained glass by Clayton and Bell (1880-1).

The Views of the Statutory Advisory Committee

The Commissioners statutory advisors, the Statutory Advisory Committee of the Church Buildings Council (SAC) have indicated that St Stephen's is a coherent and well-preserved building, of moderate significance overall as a heritage asset. They advised that the building should be converted to a suitable alternative use. They advised that in achieving that there was little scope for alteration or adaptation of the exterior and some scope for adaptation of the interior. The SAC did not consider the church to be a candidate for vesting in the Churches Conservation Trust.

Planning and Access

The church is listed Grade II* with the lychgate and churchyard walls being listed Grade II. Also, St Stephen's is located within the High Weald AONB and the Ashdown Forest zone of influence. The proposed use will involve minimal alterations to the building to provide kitchenette and toilet facilities. Planning permission was granted for such changes when the church was in use but this was never implemented and has lapsed. A new application will be submitted once the lease is completed.

Access is obtained directly from the public highway where a semi-circular lay-by provides limited parking in front of the lychgate. The prospective lessee owns adjoining land which may be available for additional parking when events are being held at the property.

Burials and the Churchyard

There are burials in the churchyard, located on the west and south sides of the church. These areas will remain in Church ownership, consecrated and continue in use for burial.

Correspondence

Further information about the proposals may be obtained from the Case Officer, Adrian Browning by e-mail at adrian.browning@churchofengland.org or by telephone at 01722 438664.

Representations against or in support of the draft Scheme

Anyone may make a representation for or against any provision of the draft Scheme. Representations should be sent to:

**Representations
Closed Churches Division, Church Commissioners
Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ**

Or by e-mail to: closedchurches.reps@churchofengland.org

Any communication received after Thursday 27 May 2021 cannot be treated as a representation.

If we receive representations against the draft Scheme, we will send all representations, both for and against, to the Bishop, whose view will be sought. Individual representors will then receive copies of our correspondence with the Bishop (including copies of all the representations) and they may comment further in writing to us in light of the diocesan response if they so wish. If no representations against the Scheme are received the Commissioners shall make the Scheme and bring it into effect as provided for in the scheme and explained above.

Information on the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and its procedures can be found on the Church Commissioners' website at www.ccpastoral.org where there are also links to download copies of these notes and the draft scheme.

A M G Browning
April 2021