

Internal Building Works: Engagement Event Findings

Event

The engagement event was held in All Saints Church on Sunday 14 June 2026, starting around 15 minutes after the 11am Sunday service had concluded. The motivation for holding the event was to gather thoughts from the congregation about the next phase of our building project: the internal refurbishment.

Attendance

Just over 40 adults attended overall with a few children also contributing at some stations, in addition to the 5 station leaders. Numbers varied slightly as not everyone took part in every station.

Stations

There were 5 stations, each with different themes and activities. A brief summary of each station:

1. **Who do we want to use the space?**

Aim: to get people to think about the different users they may not be aware of.

Draw and describe people we want to reach to use our building, on big paper.

2. **What small improvements can we make?**

Aim: Appraise our current setup with new eyes.

Walk around the building and look for quick and cheap improvements we can make now.

3. **Wishlist: What new features/facilities do we want?**

Aim: Feel involved with the plans for the internal building refurbishment.

Write down the key features individuals and the community want from the building.

4. **Belonging: What makes All Saints special.**

Aim: Give people a sense of belonging and look at the positives of our church.

Vote for and discuss which activities and attributes of All Saints make it special, and which rely on the building?

5. **Embrace our building's heritage.**

Aim: Think about the history and how to preserve this.

List items of heritage and discuss which are most important to preserve, comparing this to which are the oldest.

After the event, there was a community barbeque ('station 6'!) which everyone was invited to join.

Station 1 findings

Who do we want to use the space?

Collated list of suggestions from the big-sheet spider diagram where all groups contributed:

Specific suggestions (for users or other ideas)	General suggestions & comments
• A.A. / N.A. / C.A. x2 • Autism training • Catering course x2 • Elderly residents dinner / music events • Fitness classes • Food Larder x2 • Guiding groups – Focus on young people x2 • Ignite • Language classes (e.g. TEFL) x2 • Low input services for neurodiverse • Neurodiverse needs / Neurodiverse friendly x2 • Neutral décor (for people who find church hard) • NHS Health Trainers advice • Old school hymns event • Over 60's/Older person's groups x3 • Photography workshop • Polling station • Refugee's group • Scouting x2 • School groups – Parkside / St Johns / Kings • Secular choir • Shower facilities • Sign language class • Skilling up • Support for single parents • Support for young parents • Toddler group • User groups who generate revenue • Warm space in winter • Washing machine • Young families • Young teenage boy's group, teaching skills that can be used within community e.g. bike repairs	• For every one • Fostering community • Bonding across class and culture • Classes both free and paying • Confidence building • Feel the love and spread singing • Joyful groups • Laughter • Learning for all • 'Love in Action' groups • Music • Need to be apolitical • Nice place for weddings • Parties / function space • Poor people • Poor groups • Positive / love focused groups • Prayer • Socials • Social / community support • Spreading community • Spreading the Word • We should be celebratory • Worship

Who should get priority?	Who shouldn't use church
• We should be open to hirings, but we should have priority in our own building • Church needs first dibs booking the space, especially Christmas and Easter	• No actively political groups • No non-inclusive groups • No to extremists

Station 2 findings

What small improvements can we make?

Participants were asked to look around the building for ‘quick wins’ – things we could do now for minimal cost and effort to improve our building.

33 responses were completed for this activity.

Summary of responses

This station elicited a real range of responses, ranging from operational changes (‘person in charge of kitchen supplies’) to event suggestions (‘discipleship courses’) to building fabric changes (‘better toilets’).

In some cases there were overlapping suggestions with station 3, particularly where people were optimistic in terms of what constituted “minimal cost and effort” (...‘bigger, better kitchen’)! Other suggestions aren’t possible due to health and safety regs (‘[latch] hook on door to hall’), or operational reasons (‘remove hymns board’ – this is used weekly for 9am service).

A few suggestions will be sorted in the coming year as part of the current phase of the building project focussing on external works, which is great. This includes:

- Ramp where steps are outside
- Plants near entrance for visitors to see
- Tidy outside appearance

“Please knock before entering” sign ... as the door can hit you!

Some genuinely small and potentially easy suggestions that the PCC could consider this year include:

- “Please knock before entering” sign on the ladies toilet as when washing hands the door can hit you
- Stairgate to chapel [children can run this way during/after services]
- Tidy cables
- Tidy up inside church
- Signs on doors to pull/push
- QR code on screen for online collection
- Cleaning windows/window sills
- Live stream services
- Mural painting (by congregation member)

Station 3 findings

Wishlist: What new features/facilities do we want?

Four questions were asked, with people writing down their responses to each and posting their forms into a box. The questions were:

1. Something *very small* but *very important* our building needs...
2. Something you personally are most looking forward to...
3. Something you think the whole church community needs most...
4. If money was no object, what MASSIVE change would you make to our building...

35 responses were completed for this activity.

Overview of response themes

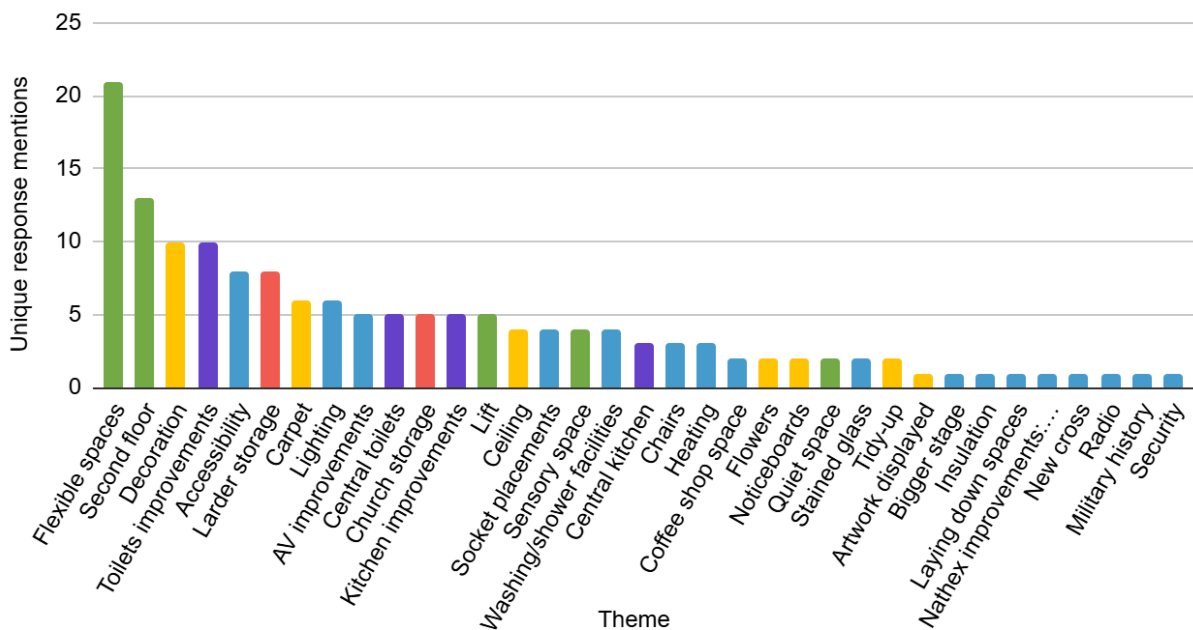


Chart shows the number of respondents who mentioned specific themes in any of their answers.

Analysis and commentary

Grouping	Themes (% of responses)	Commentary With the "Question which gave majority of responses"
Spaces around the building	- Flexible spaces (60%) - Sensory space (11%) - Quiet space	"Something you think the whole church community needs most" More flexible spaces: included requests for smaller spaces, a larger number of available spaces for groups, and specific types of space e.g. sensory or quiet.
	- Second floor (37%) - Lift (14%)	"If money was no object, what MASSIVE change would you make to our building" An expanded second floor area to give more space in the building. This included adding additional toilets upstairs and storage space upstairs.

Kitchen & toilets	• Toilet improvements (29%) • Kitchen improvements (14%)	<i>“Something you personally are most looking forward to”</i> Our toilets are tired and old, a lot of responses would like to see these improved.
	• Central toilets (14%) • Central kitchen (9%)	<i>“If money was no object, what MASSIVE change would you make to our building”</i> Moving the toilets and kitchen to the centre of the building gives more flexibility in terms of using different spaces. Currently only the hall has direct toilet access.
Storage	• Larder storage (23%) • Church storage (14%)	<i>Evenly split across answers to all questions!</i> A lot of people acknowledge the building needs more storage space. This includes both those who find visibly stacked items an eyesore so feel they should be stored out of sight, and people using these items who would like more organised and secure space for storage.
General decor	• Decoration (29%) • Carpet (17%) • Ceiling (11%) • + 4 others	<i>“Something *very small* but *very important* our building needs”</i> A lot of responses included specific or general comments about the building’s decor. Many of these are not big changes, e.g. flower, noticeboard content, putting up artwork. Others are more significant investments (although weren’t all seen as such by some people!), e.g. removing the 1970s false ceiling, replacing the 20yr-old carpet, and repainting the entire building.
Other items	• Accessibility (23%)	<i>“Something you think the whole church community needs most”</i> This covered accessibility in a range of ways, but mainly was about step-free access improvements.
	• Lighting (17%)	A couple of responses wanted improved external lighting. The rest were very non-specific, just wanting e.g. “better lighting”!
	• AV system improvement (14%)	Some non-specific responses about upgrades, and also a couple of specific comments about reliability of the sound system, which probably refers to radio mic dropouts.
	• Socket placements (11%)	This is a known issue and a big pain – the worship space in the building has only 2 sockets, both in the vestry area. Everything in the main worship space requires extension leads from these.

Station 4 findings

Belonging: What makes All Saints special

Participants were given 2 stickers of each colour and each group then voted for options in answer to the three questions below:

- Which things make you **feel a part** of All Saints? **BLUE**
- Which things make you **proud** to be part of All Saints? **RED**
- What things make All Saints **distinctive**? **GREEN**

Response data

48 people answered with their blue stickers, 36 with their red, and 37 with their green.

Option	Group results (each dot is one sticker)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Community: Thursday Coffee morning / Friday morning hub tea & toast					
Helping those in need: Food larder food distribution					
Facilitating: Offering services at Friday Hub (Connecting Canterbury, Citizens Advice, etc)					
Community: Mental Health Art Group					
Sunday: Our style of worship (music)					
Sunday: Our style of service (informal; projector)					
Community: The number of hall users through the week					
Mission: Ignite					
Ability to have parties and events at church					
Community: Christmas Fayre					
Christmas outreach: Santa Truck & Vauxhall Road carols					
Homegroups					
Ale Saints					
Church social events (e.g. bring and share lunches)					
Children's work					

Analysis and commentary

Across all groups, the top 5 voted responses for each questionnaire given below:

Rank	Which things make you <i>feel a part of All Saints</i> ?	Count
1st	Sunday: Our style of worship (music)	 13
2nd	Helping those in need: Food larder food distribution	 12
2nd	Sunday: Our style of service (informal; projector)	 12
4th	Homegroups	 10
4th	Children's work	 10

Rank	Which things make you <i>proud to be part of All Saints</i> ?	Count
1st	Helping those in need: Food larder food distribution	 23
2nd	Sunday: Our style of worship (music)	 7
2nd	Sunday: Our style of service (informal; projector)	 7
2nd	Children's work	 7
5th	Church social events (e.g. bring and share lunches)	 6

Rank	What things make All Saints <i>distinctive</i> ?	Count
1st	Helping those in need: Food larder food distribution	 23
2nd	Sunday: Our style of service (informal; projector)	 14
3rd	Mission: Ignite	 11
4th	Community: Thursday Coffee morning / Friday morning hub	 6
5th	Christmas outreach: Santa Truck & Vauxhall Road carols	 5

The options:

- The list of options resonated well with people: Every option got at least 1 sticker in Q1.
- Several people wished 'Inclusion' was an option. It is something they are particularly proud of (i.e. Q2) and it made them feel a part of All Saints (i.e. Q1). This referred particularly to inclusivity for neurodiversity.

Q1 – Feeling a part:

- The most well balanced in terms of spread of responses, showing across the congregation there is a wide range of factors that influence people feeling a part of All Saints.
- Homegroups scored well here (8 votes; ranked 6th), but a couple of people mentioned not knowing anything about these so that shows an area we can do better.

Q2 – Pride:

- The Food larder was a runaway winner here. This shows that the congregation are proud of the work we do here to help those in the community in need.

Q3 – Distinctiveness:

- The top 3 responses are not unexpected: our worship is more informal than local churches; there is no other local Ignite plant; we run Canterbury's biggest drop-in food larder.

Recurring themes:

- Several items scored well across all questions, particularly our Food larder and our style of Sunday worship. It's natural that these distinctive parts of All Saints draw people in looking for this type of church, and so help them feel a part of the church and feel proud of them.

Station 5 findings

Embrace our building's heritage

Some of the key themes, items, and discussion points across the 5 groups:

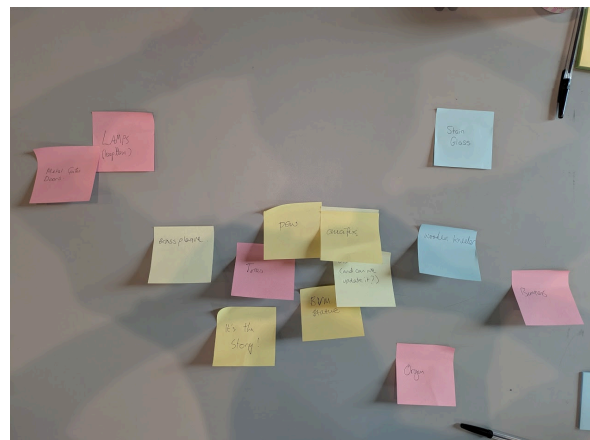
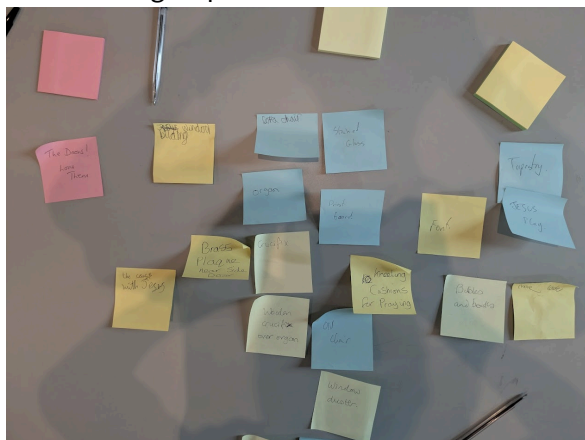
- **Organ.** Every group named the organ as part of our heritage: 3 groups ranked this as of least importance to preserve, and 2 groups as of middling importance. There were several discussions about removing the organ to gain space as it is very rarely used.
- **Ironwork.** Three groups named ironwork in some form (both the hall internal ironwork, and the ironwork supporting the lamp in the curtilage wall). These groups all positively associated this with our heritage.
- **Stained glass.** All groups name our stained glass windows as important to preserve. Some thought that stained glass windows help denote the building as a church to the public. Not all groups realised that much of the glass in the windows came from St Gregory's church originally.
- **Doors.** Our wooden exterior doors were noted by two groups, both of which liked them as traditional church doors. However, within the discussion it was also raised and agreed that church could be more welcoming and accessible if not hidden behind a thick wooden door. Some creative thoughts on how the doors could be preserved whilst 'opening up' access were discussed!
- **Brass plaque (on worship space roadside wall).** This was named by four groups, and was thought to be fairly important to keep as an assumed part of our heritage from St Gregory's church, but no one in any group actually knew what the plaque said or where it came from!
- **Tapestry.** The rainbow tapestry behind the projector screen was an example one group named of some 'modern heritage', and this was thought of as very important to preserve as it represented the church well and images of this tapestry are often used.
- **Ceiling.** One group discussed the ceiling in the worship space. Within the group its appearance was universally disliked, but thoughts were divided on how to replace it ('should be lower for cheaper heating costs' vs 'should be higher to give us the full height of the building and be less visible').
- **Priest list board.** This was given as the example artifact to all groups as it was easily visible from the table, although not all groups added it to a post-it note. Those that did though it was of only middling importance, but despite this all were keen that it be updated/extended to bring it up to date [it's missing the current and previous priest].
- **Various St Gregory's artifacts (in storage).** Several individuals mentioned that these were important as part of our heritage, but their existence is unknown to many congregation members. The silverware on loan to the Cathedral archives was also mentioned by one group.
- **Military history.** Two groups noted the omission of any obvious artifacts that connected the present building with its military history as a garrison church. Both groups thought this is an important part of our heritage and if possible this should be made more prominent. Other groups discussed that we should have 'history boards' or similar story-telling or timeline information panels to inform our regular congregation/users and visitors about our heritage.

In terms of what makes an item important to our heritage, all groups agreed that the age of the item is only one factor. Some items they valued the most were not the oldest. One group concluded that “it’s the story” of the item that determines its heritage importance. Several groups valued the more visible items (e.g. the hanging crucifix; the stained glass windows; the tapestry behind the altar). Some of the oldest items in the fabric of the church were also seen as very important (e.g. the bell, the ironwork).

Example output from one group’s discussion:



Some other groups:



Feedback

Post event comments received

“It was lovely to hear people talking outside about how valued they felt that we wanted their input and they said it really felt like we were trying to include everyone including the community.”

“I wanted to thank you for yesterday’s opportunity to share in developments going forward for church. It was a good session with good levels of engagement - which were a reflection on the planning for and delivery of the session. Thank you!

It would be really helpful for folk to have some feedback on their reflections and suggestions. Just maybe a brief summary of the range of opinion represented at each station and those things which carried the strongest opinion or most people held in common.

I’d appreciate you sharing that thought with the PCC- unless of course it’s already in the plan!

My thanks again for all you have done and are doing for this exciting time for church’s development.”