

Anne Griffiths

From: Carr at Nelmes <carr.nelmes@tiscali.co.uk>
Sent: 28 January 2013 15:36
To: Anne Griffiths
Cc: kquinlan@chelmsford.anglican.org
Subject: Draft Scheme for the Demolition of St Peter's Church, Birch - Diocese of Chelmsford

For the attention of Mrs Anne Griffiths, Church Commissioners

Your Ref: RC08/40CL

Dear Mrs Griffiths,

Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011
The closed church building of Birch St Peter, Diocese of Chelmsford

Thank you for your letter of 2nd January and the documentation enclosed with it.

It may be relevant to explain that I am priest of the Church of England (of some 45 years standing) and have lived in the parish of Birch, now Layer Breton with Birch, for more than thirty years.

I am fully supportive of the draft Scheme providing for the demolition of St Peter's church, Birch, and appropriation of the site of the demolished building as part of the churchyard.

As noted in the documentation you sent, St Peter's has now been closed for worship for more than twenty years. The structure was, I believe, in a very poor state even prior to closure. Since closure there has been further substantial deterioration of the fabric due to exposure to the elements and the (fully understandable) lack of maintenance and heating. Several years ago it became necessary to erect a corrugated-iron safety fence around the building because of the danger of falling masonry. The building, and the safety fence around it, are now eyesores. I share the view that the time has come for action to finally resolve the issue of the building's future.

There is no doubt in my mind that serious efforts have been made, over many years, to explore alternative uses for the building. All to no avail. My perception is that all potentially realistic or viable options have been fully considered. It is no surprise to me that the estimated costs of repair or restoration are far too high to justify restoration of the church as a place of worship (and we have sufficient buildings in our united benefice to meet all foreseeable needs) or its conversion to other use.

I believe demolition of the building will greatly enhance the environment of the churchyard which is regularly used for burials. Also, I think there are people who will be grateful to once again have access to graves of deceased relatives which are located between the security fencing and the walls of the church.

I hope the above comments may be of some assistance if it becomes necessary for you to consider representations made against the draft Scheme.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Richard Carr

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