

## The Way of the Gospel

The decision of the Local Planning Authority to turn down our application for the re-development of St Thomas More is disappointing and a set back. However it was not wholly unexpected and the developers are confident that an appeal against the decision will be successful. What it means is that our vision for a new Church will take a little longer to materialise than we had originally hoped.

Disappointment and setback are no strangers to the Christian. The Gospel tells us that we will encounter such characters on our journey and such moments of sadness and frustration have to be navigated and overcome if we are to carry out the task of making the kingdom real and present in our lives and amongst our community. Following last Wednesday's decision it would be easy to allow our chins to drop and to ask ourselves if what we want to build and grow is realistic. I have no doubt that it is both realistic and achievable. As a community we have been determined and dedicated in supporting this project and the motivation for its justification remains both right and proper. We are utilising the gifts and resources we possess in order to offer to the people around us a share in the gospel values which we so love and cherish, and this is precisely what the gospel calls on us to do.

Naturally this setback hurts, but we should not allow it to deter us from our ambition. We want the Eucharist to be celebrated in this place as it is and has been, for many, many more years to come. And we want this celebration of God's love to be undertaken with dignity and reverence by a community which expresses that love with effusion and fullness, in a building which through its simplicity of design and character resonates with such sentiments. Of course the Eucharist isn't limited by physical boundary nor its effect determined by design, but symbolism helps our understanding by getting us actively involved. This is perfectly expressed by St Luke in the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The two disciples have just experienced a crushing disappointment and question what is the point of it all. The stranger who walks beside them engages them in an extensive examination of their motives and what their understanding of their mission is. They are perplexed yet at the same time absorbed by what they hear. Ultimately their eyes are opened and their understanding is made real in the breaking of bread. Their disappointment vanishes and they set out to do the work of the gospel. Perhaps this is the point we have reached on our journey and we need to hear the Risen Lord calling out to us as he offers his gifts once more. We need to feel our hearts burning within us, animating us to work for the establishment of the kingdom.

So we must not let our morale drop, but rather renew our determination to achieve our hopes. To encourage and support one another and formally welcome Fr David and his family in to the parish, we are going to have a shared table party on Saturday 5 October 2013 after the Vigil Mass and I encourage as many of you as possible to come along and make it a special evening of renewing our commitment to our parish. Over these last three years we have worked hard raising over £15,000 in the service of our community. Let us come and enjoy each other's company, and support the work of all who offer themselves in service to the Way of the Gospel.