

## **This Coming Sunday's Special General Meeting**

There will be a Special General Meeting of Holy Trinity Avonside parishioners in the Harper Gardens Lounge this coming Sunday, 17 April, immediately following the 9.30 am Palm Sunday Liturgy.

The Bishop has requested this meeting, and has suspended the usual need to give 10 days notice of such a meeting. She will be in attendance at the meeting, and the Service beforehand.

You will be aware that the Hall and the Church are very seriously damaged, and need to come down. The three motions that will be put to the meeting are one step in a chain of procedures and protocols that need to be followed to bring this about.

The demolition of the Hall is an event that we would like to happen as soon as possible because there are three blocks of flats fronting on to Stanmore Rd that cannot be reoccupied until it comes down. Its early demise as a result of after shocks could also damage the adjacent Columbarium, and might endanger the Avonside House residents in the two units adjacent to Lychgate Close. A Resource Consent application will shortly be filed with the Council to get permission for this. From the Church point of view a parishioner SGM needs to request the Bishop for permission to demolish the Hall.

The Church is a different proposition. Considerable care needs to be taken to deconstruct it in such a way as to retrieve items that would be useful and valuable in the next Church on site. The Vestry will need to be very clear about what it does and doesn't want retrieved and saved. This upcoming meeting doesn't have to grapple with that issue. But again it does need to request permission from the Bishop for the deconstruction to occur. This is not likely to happen in a hurry.

Prior to the deconstruction the Church needs to be deconsecrated. This consists of a brief Service conducted by the Bishop with parishioners invited to attend. It would take place in a safe location immediately adjacent to the Church. What the Service does is to lift the former Episcopal blessing by which the building was set apart for the purpose of Divine worship. Again we need to petition the Bishop for this to happen.

Elizabeth Clarke from the Church Property Trustees will be present at the meeting to provide information and to answer questions. CPT own the title deeds to most Anglican property in this Diocese, and they will be crucially involved in what is about to happen.

While the motions that will come before the meeting are procedurally straightforward, and will not be unexpected by parishioners, they carry a heavy freight of meaning and sadness for us because the Church of the Most Holy Trinity has been the spiritual home for the Anglican community in Avonside for the past 155 years. We should pray for one another and be kind to one another at this difficult time.