

Jeff and Sharon's meeting with the probation service 9th October 2024

We (Sharon and myself) had a very positive meeting with the probation service this morning.

The headline news is that they are happy to take on the decorating in the church, vestry, corner storage room, library areas and external doors. They see it as a good project for themselves, and is a substantial piece of work for them to be a part of.

Their only concern is that they are not sure about working at height – although the fact that we will be providing an industrial working platform from which to work, which would be erected by fully trained (or they will be by the time things start) team, may change that, and they will go further up their chain of command for guidance.

The internal height of our church is ~7.5m. From a quick search on Amazon, telescopic extension poles for a painting roller now go up to 9m.

Just below the ceiling height around most of the church walls is a decorative cornice - which visually extends down to about 300mm below the ceiling height.

So, if they are not able to use the working platform at height, then we have the option of a small team decorating the ceiling and down to just below the cornice, cutting in for say 300mm below the cornice, so that the probation service could roller up to. I think it would also be wise for us to decorate in the recess areas around each window for neatness – as it would be very difficult to paint these with a roller from ground level.

The only other issue is that they will only use water-based paints – so the limewash would not be possible.

Their teams work Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

They will start their administration processes as soon as they have clarification on working at height – which normally takes about a month once their plans have been formulated. This will mean that they will be able to start whenever we would like after their plans acceptance from central government – with minimal delay.

There are a number of smaller issues for us to consider. In no particular order, they include:

They can move the pews;

They work between 9:30am to 4:00pm, but we have requested that they consider for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday working inside until 3pm and then clean their tools etc using the outdoor tap. This would tie in with Olwyn's working hours so that she would open and lock up the building for them (which she is happy to do).

But this would mean they need an external storage area to put the tools in overnight. They need us to confirm the storage area;

We would need to cover opening and closing down on Saturday and Sunday;

They will supply a Risk Assessment and a Contract for us to sign up to;

Due to possible children's activities in the community centre, they will not send any offenders who pose a risk to children;

They would like the safe to be inaccessible and are happy for the vestry to remain locked with access to the toilets via the carpark;

We need to provide all materials, tools and dust sheets. They will specify what they need;

They will arrive in one minibus and Olwyn has agreed that she is happy to cone off a space at 9 am during the weekdays for them to use;

Once we know the time-frame they will come back to undertake a more detailed project plan;

They have identified a supervisor they would use - who only does decorating, and is experienced in working in churches and community buildings. They think that there will be up to eight offenders working at any one time; and

They do not need any canteen facilities.

But the good news is that it's a goer.

Jeff