

Response from Twigworth Parish Council to the document provided by the Church of England Church Commissioners titled

EXPLANATORY NOTE

MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011

DRAFT PASTORAL CHURCH BUILDINGS SCHEME

TWIGWORTH ST MATTHEW

DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER

Background

The fabric of the building that is St Matthew's Church was left largely untended for several years prior to its closure in 2020. Whilst the closure of the church as an active place of worship was understandable given the attendances at the time, it did not seem to have taken into account the major increase in the population of the village from 2020 and ongoing (fivefold and more). It was also the parish church of Longford, which has also seen a significant rise in its population.

In the years leading up to the closure, there was minimal consultation with local people, or contact with Twigworth Parish Council, and it is a major regret that opportunities to secure Section 106 monies from the developments to restore the building and develop a village amenity were missed: it is understood that discussions took place between the Church and Tewkesbury Borough Council regarding Section 106 monies, to which the local Parish Council and residents were not party.

Two points of fact in response to remarks under 'Background' on page 1:

"There is development in this area and it was hoped that this would help swell the church attendance but unfortunately for Twigworth the main focus of the development lies away from this linear village and correspondingly most people look to Longlevens rather than Twigworth."

1. St Matthew's Church closed before the new housing sites were built.
2. "The main focus of the development lies away from this linear village and correspondingly most people look to Longlevens rather than Twigworth": With regard to what? We do not understand what is meant by this statement.

Response to the Current proposals

The prospect of restoration and a use for the building is broadly welcomed.

However, there are significant caveats which we believe the Church Commissioners should act upon, and where appropriate formally include in any transfer.

1. The building is one of precious few that reflect the history of the village. While it is very much welcomed that the purchaser has expressed an intention to preserve the character and charm of the original building, we feel that this should be formally stipulated in a covenant by the seller so that it remains in place for future owners.

2. The purchaser intends the building to be occupied as a single dwelling for one family. That too is welcomed, but again it is critical that this is formalized by covenant by the seller. The reasons for this:

- i. The churchyard is still active. Relatives regularly visit the churchyard, not only of the recently deceased but also those who died longer ago. Multiple occupancy or an increase in dwellings (e.g. several apartments) would without doubt impact upon the churchyard in an unacceptably negative way.
- ii. The narrow private road running alongside the churchyard, sometimes referred to as 'Church Lane', whose entrance/exit is on a bend of the A38, cannot take a substantial increase in traffic without its use becoming significantly more dangerous.

Parking/garden

We report local people's shock and deep concern about the proposed space for parking/garden. It includes four burial sites from the last ten years, which are regularly visited by relatives, including one visited frequently by the deceased's parents. Very close to the space outlined in the proposal are several other very recent graves.

As the intention of the purchaser is to build a single dwelling, we believe that such space does not have to be anything like as large. We respectfully remind the Church Commissioners that the churchyard is a much-cherished area for both the villages of Twigworth and Longford.

We note that The Rectory, which is close by and under the supervision of the Church Commissioners, is now vacant, and has a plentifully large area for parking.

We ask that the Church Commissioners support any requests for TPO's with regard to trees in the Church Yard

We attach a map of alternative parking available in the area

Construction traffic

We ask the Church Commissioners that the vacant Rectory car park be made available to the purchaser during construction for construction support, such as building supplies, skips, vehicles, and other machinery, and such items are not stored in the churchyard (unless it is within the footprint of the church building itself), or in the lane or in front of the church by the A38.

The lane is used by residents of the adjacent properties, and their rights to come and go should not be impeded.

Ancillary buildings

We note that the footprint of the church building is very large and so question the need for ancillary buildings. We ask what these buildings are intended for.

In sum

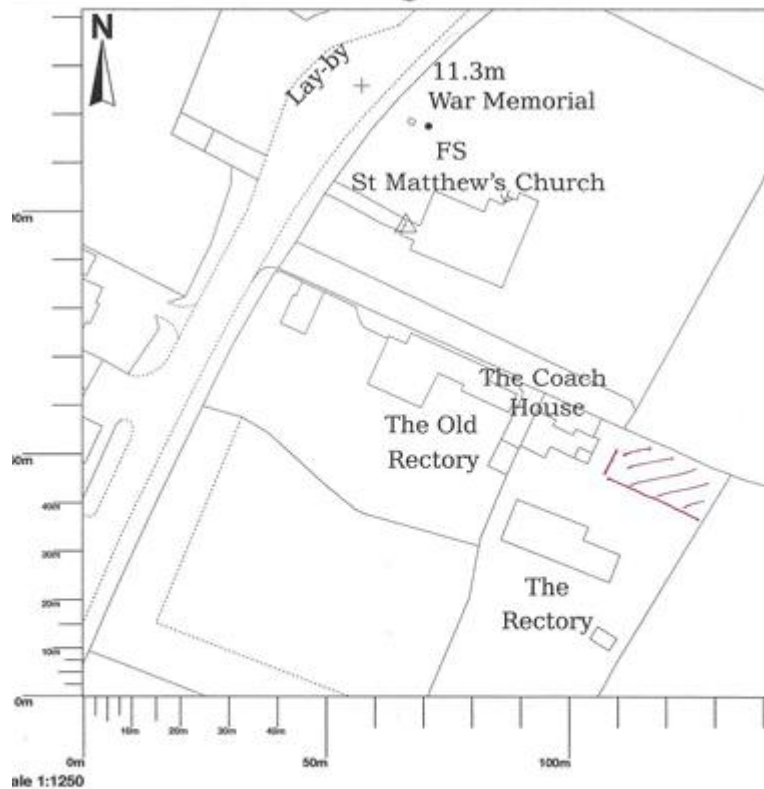
We ask the Church Commissioners to respect local feelings and sensitivity for the churchyard and take steps to ensure a minimum of interruption or negative impact; and to address concerns listed above formally and properly.

Two covenants are needed, as already mentioned, one to protect the character of the building, and the other to ensure the dwelling is a single one for one family's occupation. It is much welcomed that both are the intention of the current purchaser, but it needs to be formalized for ongoing occupiers.

Twigworth Parish Council

August 2026

Proposed parking for St Matthew's Church



/// Parking for St Matthew's