

Church: St Edmund, Taverham

Interviewees: D1, D2, Rachel Seabrook D3

Date: Thursday, 2 July 2015

1. NW: Thank you all very much for agreeing to participate in this. Could we start by giving me an idea of how long you've each been involved in the church, and in what capacity. D1?
2. D1: Probably about nearly 20 years I've been here. I came to work for the Norwich diocese as children's advisor, and I lived in this parish so I worshipped in this parish. So I've been retired 11 years. At present I'm PCC secretary, and part of the ministry team. Yeah.
3. NW: Thank you. D2?
4. D2: I've not been here very long. I think it's 5 years in September when I first came. My wife and myself joined, fully membership of the church, just over four years. Just after I joined I became a member of the grounds team, and my wife helped with the church cleaning, and I'm fabric officer, helping to keep an eye on the upkeep of the church, you know. And I have been on this building committee and general dogs body, that's about all really isn't it, I can't think of anything else [to D3], can you? [laughs]
5. D3: Publicity group?
6. D2: Yeah, I'm on the publicity group, put the banners up for various function, but I'm relatively a new boy.
7. NW: Well done. How many of you are there on the building group?
8. D2: With X and Y, another three at least, isn't there?
9. NW: Right.
10. D3: Yes, there's six of us isn't there? There's X, Y, D1, D2, Z and me; yeah, six of us.
11. NW: And D3, how long have you been here?
12. D3: I've been here eight years, my husband is the rector, I'm part of the ministry team, I'm Church Army officer, trained by D1 [laughs] a long time ago, and for my sins, which must have been a lot of sin, because I'm chair of the building group [laughs].
13. D2: You must have been a naughty girl.
14. D3: I must have been bad, yeah.
15. NW: So how would say what the role that the church plays for the congregation, and for the wider community; the church building, the site I suppose?
16. D1: Well, it's our only place to gather; we have no other premises. So clearly it's a centre for worship, but it's a centre for much else as well. School groups come in regularly, we have Messy Church here, we turn it into a place where crafts can be done, we put tables across pews. And we have a Christmas Fair, an Advent Fair in here, because it is our *only* meeting place that belongs to this church, so we try to make the most of it. You know, of the church and the grounds.

17. D3: We also have an open church policy, so our church is open every day from about 8:30 it's unlocked, to about 5.30. And we have a sign saying that it's open. Because I think we have a very strong sense that whilst this may be the place that we meet together on a Sunday, this is the church for the community, and I think part of that stems from its Anglican tradition, is that we are the parish church for the community. And you know we have a lot of baptisms, a lot of weddings, so our outreach into the community in terms of those kinds of services is a lot, and I think there is a general feeling in Taverham that this is 'Taverham Church', I think people would call it 'Taverham Church' often, rather than St Edmunds, which I think is probably a reflection that they see it as part of the bigger community.
18. NW: And that community, I think you were saying, is about 16,000.
19. D3: Yeah, I think so. And most of it, a lot of it, is on the other side. So if you go up Sandy Lane here, across the road, across the main Fakenham Road, there's a massive estate called Thorpe Marriott, which was started about 30 years [ago]...
20. D1: But half of it belongs to this parish and half of it...
21. D3: Yeah.
22. NW: Can you just give me an idea of the project. You're part way through something trying to do something; can you just spell it out for me where you've got to?
23. D3: We've got a design, which at the moment is in the process of being tweaked, really, not revamped. We've got the backing of the DAC to go ahead, and they're very much in favour of what we want to do, and we've got a brilliant architect, Ruth Blackman, and she has come up with a design which we've had on display for people to see. She built a 3D model of it, and we've had that on display, and the general feeling is that people really like it. We had a meeting back in, I think it was October, with all the various committees, so the DAC, English Heritage, Broadland [District Council], the Church Buildings Council all came, and then she gathered their reports together and on the whole I think it was quite positive, although there were some concerns raised that it might be a bit too big. So she's revamping it a little bit, and then we're hoping to meet with her fairly soon, and then hopefully, I don't know, hopefully next we'll go to take it to some sort of informal planning meeting stage, before we put in planning permission. So we're still fairly early on in the process; it just moves incredibly slowly, possibly that's partly because I'm not a very quick person, but we are definitely taking major steps forward. Because this is not the first time, to my understanding, that it's been attempted to put a new building in. I think there have been a couple of attempts previously.
24. D1: Really?
25. D3: I think so, yeah.
26. D1: In whose time?
27. D3: In Bob's time. Well I think there's certainly been prelim... because I've seen the papers, there have been...
28. D1: Well we have had the drawings. But you were here when we had those octagonal drawings?

29. D3: Yes, but I mean prior to that as well.
30. D1: Really?
31. D3: Yes, I think so, yeah.
32. NW: So there was an octagonal scheme done?
33. D1: The then architect that we were using did us some drawings to put an octagonal [building] out there on the turning circle are.
34. NW: Right, so to the south.
35. D1: Actually when we had a meeting with Broadland and others people actually felt that was quite dated these days. And there's no doubt... I liked it, you know I quite liked the look of it, but there's no doubt in my mind that the scheme that Ruth Blackman's come up with feels more right to me. The thing that is so nice about it is that it kind of wraps around the church out there. You know, which gives the feel of being part of, rather than separate.
36. D2: Yes, just widens the same effect, rather than being something completely different, and the good thing about the new plan is – well and with the octagon one – it doesn't interfere with the internal structure of the church whatsoever. So very often when you have an extension you lose quite a piece of what you've already got. But this separate building would not distract anything away from this building whatsoever, apart from visual, which was one of English Heritage's biggest, well their main, gripe was that they thought it was rather too large. I think one of the difficulties, you appreciate, the church is built on quite a slope, and wherever you are level one end, the other side of the building you are five foot up in the air or you are five foot down a hole. You know it's not easy. So we did have one or two other ideas, but it would mean either being under, or steps to get in, and then you've got disabled access. So it's not an easy piece of land to put an extension on, not really with the shape of it.
37. NW: So is it a single story extension, or is it two storey?
38. D3: Two storeys. [to D1:] Have you got a key to the vestry?
39. D1: In the car, yeah.
40. D3: Because I wonder if we could get the model out, because I think it's upstairs on the balcony.
41. D1: I'll go and get the key out of the car.
42. D3: It's a two-storey building, but basically we could do whatever we wanted inside it, but it would give us toilets, a small office where we could keep the photocopier and that sort of thing, a big meeting room with a smaller meeting room, that we could then join up to make a massive meeting room, and a kitchen. And the kitchen would be on this side, so that it would face out into a courtyard, and the entrance would be on this side as well. So although they aren't physically joined by bricks and mortar, they are joined, psychologically if you like, by this courtyard. And then upstairs there's rooms that would be used for storage and a strip of light that would come all the way along, a strip of windows, glass, so that it would be

very light. Because obviously we don't want to use the light from this side of church.

43. D2: The upstairs was mainly for a good storage area, rather than actually functional, wasn't it? But we do need storage area badly, you see, and it would be... and the way she designed the roof section was quite, what shall I say, very imaginative really. And that looked quite good, but you see English Heritage thought it was rather too large. And when we had the meeting to tie up all the information from all these different groups, because they all sent in their reports, I think we were a little bit disappointed that Ruth hadn't tweaked it really; she just basically said, 'Slam the table and put in an appeal'. [Laughter] Because even the English Heritage said that it was good, but they were a little bit cautious about how it would stop the visual. Because many of the pictures people take of Taverham they're all taken – wedding couples – they're all out there you see, and it's the view that everybody knows. Strange enough, coming from round the corner, down the river down there everyone would think you'd see the church, but in summertime you can't see the church at all because of the trees.
44. NW: Yes, yes.
45. D2: So it's really not... on photographs it seems to obstruct because people go round and take photographs from just one or two places where they can get in the view they want, but in reality when you're passing by, it doesn't really obstruct the view of the church, because that view is only there from one or two small places.
46. NW: Yes, currently it's quite well screened, isn't it by those trees?
47. D2: Yeah, yeah.
48. D1: I think if there has been another plan in the past, I would suggest that it's over 30 years ago. I've been here 20, and Bob never ever talked about it. I think Bob was getting quite confused at times, you know, and I think he might be giving D3 the impression the plans we had drawn up for something on the glebe...
49. NW: Right.
50. D1: ...was all part of the same thing.
51. NW: I see.
52. D1: But in his mind that might have been... but that was all part of the investigative... Because we had another set of drawings given us that was a lean-to on this [north] side of the church.
53. NW: OK.
54. D1: It looked awful. It really was a dreadful thing.
55. D2: Yeah well, strangely enough, this [south] side was the attractive side of the church, although the new extension, although not joined to it, it will in some ways obscure the beauty of this flint wall, whereas the other [north] side...
56. D1: Yes.
57. D2: Well, it's the historical side...
58. D1: Yes, well I can see that, but the drawing they actually came up with were pretty grim.

59. D2: Yeah.
60. D1: Yeah, on that side.
61. D2: That's the oldest wall, you see, and that's prehistoric almost, and that's why...
62. D1: And all it would have given us was a single floor, just a strip, like another aisle really, you know, on that side.
63. D2: And the slope didn't make it any easier did it, and there's graves...
64. D1: There are old graves there.
65. D2: ...reasonably, relatively new graves there in the last twenty years. Although when you look at it you'd think that would be the obvious place, going into detail, everybody, even the professionals...
66. D1: Isn't it [the model] there?
67. NW: Not to worry.
68. D1: I don't know where it's gone then.
69. D2: One of the outstanding parts about it...
70. D1: Ruth didn't take it did she?
71. D2: She may have done, I don't really know. But it was around for a long while. It didn't get taken up to the... for the AGM did it?
72. D1: Ruth didn't take it, did she, D3?
73. D3: Oh I don't know, I don't think so. No, I'm sorry about that, I should have thought about that.
74. NW: Don't worry, not a problem. How would you describe the character of the building; you were talking about the north side being the ugliest but oldest bit, and important. What's, overall, what's the character of the church building? What's important about it?
75. D1: You mean, what's...
76. D3: I think that one of the things that probably, and it's not a concrete thing at all, I think a lot of people would say this is a very peaceful place. That's one of the greatest characteristics of this church, is that I think a lot of people feel this sense of peace when they come in here. I think that's probably because it's been prayed in for a thousand years, but... and people really comment on that. I mean it's always lovely to see the children when the children come in from the schools, and they hear how old it is, and they just think that's amazing, that this church is over a thousand years old. And I think that people see it as a very special place.
77. D1: I think for me, and I know I'm not necessarily typical of the whole of our congregation, I would find it hard to say that there is anything that is particularly special about the interior; for me it's the people that gather in it.
78. D3: Yeah.
79. D1: You know, more than...
80. D2: Well I was going to say that the place is special because...
81. D1: ...the building itself, you know.
82. D2: ...because the people are special.

83. D3: Yeah.
84. D1: It's quite interesting really, when I first came I made a comment to somebody about this [chancel] screen being a bit of a nuisance [D3 laughs, then D1] and you know the comeback immediately was 'You leave our screen alone' [laughs]. You know, because if you actually look at the church, this chancel is nearly as big as the nave, you know, and it's very kind of... blocks one bit off from the other. So while this has a usefulness, that in itself has a usefulness, because at Messy Church we use this for the worship part, and that for craft part.
85. NW: So using it as two rooms.
86. D1: Yes, it's a bit like that really, and when we used to do Ed's Teds, you know with Godly Play regularly the smaller children, they played there [in the nave], but we didn't play here [in the chancel], we came for story here, and they learned that as they grew up, and it was a much quieter kind of space. So there's a usefulness about it, but I can equally see a usefulness for opening it up [laughs] and reordering it, you know, but... [laughs]...
87. D3: And I think depending on what you want...
88. D1: But that would be typical of a lot of the members of the congregation...
89. D3: ...yeah, and I think also as well, depending on what you're using it for. If you're a member of the congregation you see it differently to say as somebody who's coming for a wedding. Yeah, particularly weddings, I don't know if I'd say baptisms, because it's a really pretty church to get married in. And it's got this lovely, fantastically tended churchyard, so it looks really lovely on the photos, so I think it depends on what you're using it for, and what your connection with it is.
90. D1: But I think, you know, I can think of one or two people who you know are very disorientated if they have to sit somewhere other than where they normally sit. Now that is more than being precious about a particular seat, I think it's because they sat there with their husband, or their wife, for so long that they feel a sense of comfort, of being in the same place. That's certainly true of XX, and to some extent I think it's true of YY, because sometimes when we've been a smaller congregation I say to her 'Come and sit by [laughs], come on down here, move'. But she, you know, there's a sense in which that's quite special...
91. D3: Yeah.
92. D1: ...sitting there, and it...
93. NW: You talked about connection, with the building, what do you think the wider community's connection with the building is. I mean if the building were to close, which I'm sure it won't, but if it were to close, who would mind?
94. D2: All the people in Taverham, I believe.
95. D1: Yes, I think they would, yeah.
96. D3: I think quite a lot of people would mind.
97. NW: So they regard it as *their* church, do they?
98. D3: Yes, I think they do, and...

99. D1: I'm amazed at the number of funerals that we have in church, of people who don't go to church. Now that is very different to a lot of places where I've worked. Very often church members have a service in church before the crem[atorium] or after the crem, but that's not so common for non-church... non-worshippers. But there is a heck of a lot of services...
100. D3: Yeah.
101. D1: ... that happen in here for funerals. Now whether that's about Paul's ministry, and him suggesting it, or whether it's their request, I don't know, but it's a fact...
102. D3: Yeah.
103. D1: ...that people seem to like that.
104. D3: And of course the other thing is that now we've been here, we've been here eight years now, which means that we've seen now some of the children coming through from Reception [class] right the way through to Year 6, so we have now this connection – that seems to be the word today, 'connection' – but also that Paul now has been here long enough that he has got family connections, so there are now lots of families where he has probably done a baptism, a wedding and a funeral, and I think that they would see this as their family church. And there is very much a sense of 'Well this is the church that we belong to', even if they don't perhaps come...
105. D1: I think that's true.
106. D3: ...on a regular basis.
107. D1: I'm sure that's true.
108. D3: But last week, Paul did a baptism of somebody; they live in Surrey, but they'd come here because they had lived here years ago and his brother lives here, and they got married here, and so it's sort of their...
109. D2: When we're doing the gardens, not so much Thursday, because maybe people around seem to know the garden's done Thursday, but sometimes if I can't come here on a Thursday I'll come on a Wednesday or a Friday, and the amount of people who come in, it's surprising. And very often they're people who I've seen around Taverham in my travels around, and they aren't church members, but they will come down. Sometimes you'll see them kneeling in the pews.
110. D1: I don't know whether we do it any more, but when we first started operating Open Church we had somebody here a lot of the time, and there still are people who come and are here in church in case visitors come, but perhaps not quite so many, but we used to have log thing at the back where we put ticks for the number of visitors that came while we were on Open Church, and for those months that we did that, there was probably half a dozen a week, not huge numbers, but significant.
111. D3: You see, I know somebody who comes in, she probably comes in at least once a week. And she doesn't live here, she works elsewhere, but she passes the church on her way home and sometimes she just stops and comes in for half an hour. And Paul came in the other day and found a young lad in a complete heap in

here, following somebody very close that had died, and he'd just come in because it was a place... and that's not the first time that's happened, either. There was Melissa, wasn't there, when her Dad died. So I think people do see it as a safe, as a safe place. Yeah, and that's really good, isn't it?

112. D2: Some will say, well I said, St Edmund's is not a church, it's a way of life.

113. D3: Yeah.

114. D2: And there is a great spiritual presence here really, and I think even strangers. I understand that those who have no Christian affiliation whatsoever might not perhaps notice it, but many who have, they feel. You know, you don't like to get spooky...

115. NW: No, no.

116. D2: ...but some places you go you feel a coldness, and some places you go you feel a warmth. Many people who come here, well we did when we came, my wife and other friends, there's a warmth here and it's, even in spite of say the shortcomings of the building, we would rather be St Edmund's congregation here, than have a divided church in the most modern building on earth, because it's the Spirit is what keeps us all together, really. Well we are spiritually a very united church, but we feel we could do so much more work with that community if we had... Like the children meet in D3 and Paul's house, well...

117. NW: During the service do you mean? You have to ferry them down...?

118. D3: No, no, because it's too far, so we're completely separate...

119. D1: So twice a month we're here, and then twice down there.

120. D3: ...I mean that's the issue really, it's too far, to ferry them backwards and forwards, so we really are...

121. NW: So parents will drop their children off at the vicarage and then come here?

122. D3: No, they stay.

123. NW: Right.

124. D3: So basically...

125. D1: So all very difficult.

126. D3: ...it's almost becoming an all age service down there.

127. NW: So it's almost two services.

128. D2: So the parents stay down there as well do they?

129. D3: So we're all together.

130. D2: Oh, I didn't realise that.

131. D1: But for years, when I first came, they ran this thing call Seeker's Group, and they used to run it, Chris Harrington, in the village hall, and they used to bring the children over, but it didn't work at all, because they would have quite a lot of kids, but then parents who weren't going to come to worship came and collected them at the village hall, and took them home, so there were just their own children really who were the only ones who...

132. D3: Yeah.

133. D1: ... came down.
134. D3: And every Sunday Club Sunday morning I get up and I think 'I need to tidy up, because Sunday Club are coming', but then I think 'Oh, great, I'll have to tidy up, because Sunday Club are coming' [laughs]. But it is a shame because, you know, it's so divisive; we are completely separate, which is not what it's all about, so I look forward to the day when we can just slip into the hall next door, and we can come back and be part of communion, or... Because I think everybody loses out. I think they lose out here because we're not here, we're losing out because... you know, it's lose, lose all round. But...
135. D1: And I think we've got one or two now whose mums were young people here, who've now got young children. And the children are quite young at the moment, but part of me thinks that they will continue to bring them to church rather than have them...
136. D3: Yes, I think you're right...
137. D1: ...in Sunday Club...
138. D3: ...because I've spoken to...
139. D1: ...whereas if in fact it was here, that might feel quite different.
140. D3: Hmmm, hmmm.
141. NW: It's very much less of a step, isn't it, in all senses, out there compared with going up the road.
142. D3: Yeah, yeah. So it is difficult.
143. NW: So, turning to the process that you're embarked upon, in terms of trying to create this new building, how would you describe it? Do you feel it's a good process, or a frustrating process, or...? You're laughing D1...
144. D1: We probably have different perspectives on it. [laughs]
145. NW: Well, I'm keen to get different perspectives on it, so...
146. D3: Well, shall I start, as the chair of the group. I will say that my perspective is one of 'Oh my goodness, how have I ended up doing this?' because I am not, you know, I'm not bright, I'm not administratively-minded...
147. D2: Who said you aren't?
148. D3: ...and all of that, I'm not that kind of person, I'm just somebody with a big mouth, who can play three chords on the guitar [laughs].
149. D2: You don't do yourself justice, D3.
150. D3: So I probably am slowing the process up myself, and I recognise that. But it is just slow anyway. For example I emailed Ruth three weeks ago to say 'When can we get together', and then I haven't heard anything, so I emailed her yesterday and said 'I just wondered if you'd had my email', so she said 'Yes, I have, and I'm preparing a reply'. And I thought 'Oh my gosh, I hope I haven't...' you know... but
151. D1: It's hard, isn't it?
152. D3: So I think because there are so many different organisations involved, inevitably that slows it down as well. So it is frustrating, because I would like it up now. But it's not happening like that.

153. NW: What about other views of the process?
154. D1: It's about our characters really isn't it, and I guess that I'm impatient [laughs] and I actually find, I'm not just talking about the building project, I'm talking about any kind of project, I need to see where it's going, and to see clearly the steps that we're going to take to get there. And it feels to me like we creep along without having that long-term perspective, and so...
155. NW: You haven't got a roadmap for it, is that what...
156. D1: Well, not properly, I don't think we have, no. But I sympathise with where D3 is [laughs]. The situation, too... and I think... I'm not sure, and I beg the forgiveness of my colleagues on the group, that between us we have all the skills that are needed to drive it forward properly.
157. D3: I think that's right.
158. D1: I don't know, you know, I just wonder where we will be, I know Dan talks about employing a fundraiser, but that is a very skilful role really, once we come to... get to the point... and I don't think the group is complete enough, and I'm not sure it has that drive in the hearts of the people. Those of us on the group can be on the group and let it tick over [laughs], but I'm not sure we're driving it really. So I'm sorry if that's not right but [laughs]...
159. D3: No, I think that's absolutely true, I do think it's true. And I think the...
160. D1: And I include myself in that, because I don't think I've got the skills to drive it forward either, so...
161. D2: I think we're buffeting our way with blinkers on in a way. With all these people, who've all got to come to some co-operation so we can move forward, and to get them all, I mean a simple thing like the eco thing, like having the trees chopped down, well in fifty years many of them limes will be past their... unless they've come down anyway, and they might fall down of their own by the time we get to sort the ground, and I think as D3 and D1 are saying we, well, unless the Lord wants it we can't see it coming off, because we've got no money really, and there're so many things. And I think as far as fundraising goes it's like most C of E churches now, it's biggest contributors in work, and I suppose money, are retired people. And there's so much going on in the church life, fundraising things to keep the church running week by week, and for the maintenance of what we've already got, that I think no-one expects the members of the church, or the congregation, to do any more to try and raise any significant amounts. I mean £150 at a jumble sale is just... It wouldn't even pay for the architect to come and have a look at it, you know, we're talking about thousands, and one of the sad things, my brother-in-law is churchwarden of Little Plumstead, and they had to call off their extension, because the people, the groups who offered them grants, the grants have to be taken up at the time, while the planning permission is on. If the three years lapses, and you've got to reapply for planning, you have to reapply for the grants, and very often if you haven't started your project, when one year they may have offered you £100,000, three years later because other people have already started on their things, you might get £50,000. So you can't say what has

been offered is there for ever; you have to – what's the old saying – strike while the iron is hot.

162. D1: But on the other side of things I am encouraged by the fact that St Mary's at Helsdon, in a 10 year period, managed to put their building up, and they're less vibrant a congregation than we are.

163. D2: Did they have any...

164. D1: They applied for grants.

165. D2: No, I mean did they have any kick off, had anyone leave them any significant amount...

166. D1: I don't think so.

167. D2: ...of money.

168. D1: Not as far as I know.

169. D2: So it was just grants then, yes?

170. D1: They kept solidly at it.

171. D3: Then I went to a place last week...

172. D1: They did lots of fundraising events as well.

173. D2: Yeah, yeah.

174. D3: ...and it took them over 30 years.

175. D1: Hmm?

176. D3: It took them thirty years to do theirs, so I suppose everybody's story is different, isn't it?

177. D2: Well, Paul was saying a few weeks ago, this will be for the next generation, not for our generation.

178. D3: Hmmm.

179. D2: It would be nice if someone left you a house, and you could say 'Yes this is a sort of sign that this is meant to be, we've got a two hundred grand kick-off.'

180. D1: It was really quite interesting when we interviewed for the post of rector – D3 can close her ears [laughs] – there was one character who was a good man, and we knew that his main objective would be to drive a building. There was no doubt about it.

181. D2: He'd do what?

182. D1: To drive forward getting some premises, and he'd got a proven track record of being able to do that. But at the end of the day we felt that that wasn't the be all and end all; it was important, but it wasn't the be all and end all, and we didn't appoint him. [Laughs] As is evident.

183. D3: Hmmm. And I think there is very definitely a sense that you learn to make do with what you've got, and...

184. D1: I think we're quite creative really.

185. D3: We are creative. And of course it has meant... if you haven't got it, you have to go out, don't you, because there's no guarantee, and we've seen this with a church

down the road from us, that you can have every mod con going, but it doesn't mean that anybody's going to come, does it?

186. D1: No, that's right.

187. D3: And they're not. The young people are not going to that church. I mean they're not coming here either, but it just goes to show that just because you've got it doesn't mean it's going to be...

188. D1: You have to have a ministry going on.

189. D3: ...in use. You've got to have a ministry, and it's got to be God-given.

190. D1: Yeah.

191. D3: And you've got to know that what you're doing is joining in with what God's doing, rather than...

192. NW: The building can never be an end in its own right...

193. D3: No, no.

194. NW: ...or shouldn't be...

195. D3: No, no.

196. D1: And we have thought we put together a 12 month calendar in which we took every day of the year, and we put into it the potential things that that building would be used for. Some of them were existing things, others are ideas of what we might do, if we had the building. And it's pretty full, isn't it, that calendar.

197. D2: Oh yeah, very.

198. D1: It's not got huge, huge gaps when it would be standing as an eyesore.

199. NW: Did you do that as...

200. D1: We did it as a group.

201. NW: Where did the idea for that come from; it sounds very interesting.

202. D3: From the local undertaker [laughs]. Yes, we have a chap called Simon, who is the local undertaker, but he's also chair of Broadland [Council] Planning. Oh, I'm not sure whether he is now or not, but anyway he's just a really helpful person to know, so he suggested one or two things that we could do which have been quite good.

203. D1: Which was quite a good exercise really.

204. D3: Yeah.

205. D1: And we each had a calendar, and we put the things we thought, and we brought them together under one.

206. D3: Yeah.

207. NW: D2, you mentioned all of these different people that you need to liaise with. How helpful have you found these stakeholders, so far?

208. D2: It's a bit of a job to say, really. I mean they've all got what you might call their own axe to grind to protect their own – I won't say job – but the job they've been designated to do. And sometimes, as a Christian group, we want this building, not to enhance the building, but to bring God's message to as many people as we can. And we find that could be through spiritual ways, through social ways,

meeting together, and Paul and D3 and the rest of the folk here, we've done really well so far, and another building would enhance that greatly. But it sometimes it seems that people aren't interested in that, they're just interested in what it will visually look like. And my argument is, look, this old thing here, that was built by Fred Bloggs, 1400...

209. NW: The chancel screen.

210. D2: ...yeah. What's the matter with Fred Bloggs, 2015? [overlapped responses] Because that 615 years, in the eyes of God, is absolutely nothing. And I think we definitely put too much emphasis on history.

211. D1: Mmm...

212. D2: Why should the dead and those who've gone generations before be calling the shots for people who are here now? Now I'm not saying we should throw out the baby with the bathwater, and [we should] use common sense with it, because there's good old, and there's bad old. But it seems as if there are some groups that don't seem to know the difference where what can stay, and what can go; which is an enhancement, and which is detrimental. It's all old, so it must be good. And I must admit I don't like that old door, that old Saxon door at the end there. 'No you can't take that [out]'. Well that's a tatty old thing, and if Alfred the Great was around now he'd say 'Why don't you change it?' [laughs]. There are some things we should just be able to get rid of and say, 'Well you've done your purpose, you're only a door, after all'.

213. D3: Yeah, yeah.

214. D2: Just go, you know. We'll have Fred Bloggs make a new one, 2015.

215. D1: [reading] What's CBC?

216. NW: Church Buildings Council.

217. D1: Who are they?

218. D3: They came from London, they were here, they were very much... It was really interesting actually.

219. D1: Oh, I wasn't here at that meeting.

220. NW: Sorry, so just to explain, the Church Buildings Council is the Church of England centrally has a group of... well the Church Buildings Council, which looks after policy for church buildings, provides a lot of resources, in terms of information, and will visit for grade 1 and grade 2* listed churches, they will want to visit when there are significant proposals, and be one of the people who comment.

221. D3: Yeah.

222. NW: Sorry, I interrupted.

223. D3: No, I was just going to say that it was extremely interesting at that meeting, because there must have been 15 people here probably including... and then most of us from the building group. And it was just really quite fascinating because there were definitely two camps, and it was just very interesting that the DAC and the CBC were very much on one side, and Broadland and English Heritage on the other. And it was just very interesting to observe that English Heritage and

Broadland you know, they sort of 'palled up', and they had a quite a detailed conversation outside in the churchyard afterwards. It was very like, it *felt* you know that they were...

224. NW: Exclusive of others, do you mean?

225. D3: Yes, that they'd almost paired up to come and say 'We're not going to let this happen'. I mean I may be misjudging them, but that's certainly how it felt as I came out.

226. D2: They were the most anti, weren't they?

227. D3: And they were incredibly anti, and the chap from English Heritage was really, I thought he was really quite rude. You know, he kept on saying 'It's *far* too big, it's just *far* too big'. Because we were all standing in a circle on the green, and I said, 'Well too [big] for what?', you know. Because I was just... the way I kind of felt about it was that he had not engaged at all with our vision; he was only engaged on a purely physical and practical level.

228. D2: Yeah, he was looking at it like a stately home, wasn't he?

229. D3: He hadn't heard...

230. D2: Yeah.

231. D3: ...anything that we'd said really about our outreach into the community, about what we saw the vision of the new building as being, whereas it seemed that because we had... the DAC particularly were very much on board, weren't they? And also when I read the report from the Church Buildings Council, they too. The conservation officer was a bit, he was kind of a bit in the middle, I think he could see it, but he was worried about his trees...

232. D1: [reading] Is that what amenity societies include?

233. NW: No. So English Heritage, Church Buildings Council, the Local Authority are in one category; the national amenity societies are people like the Victorian Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Georgian Society... There are six of them who one has to allow the opportunity to comment.

234. D1: Well, were they here that day?

235. D3: No, they weren't here, we haven't even touched them yet. But in fact I don't think it's going to... we're going to touch the porch, the porch remains as it is anyway. Because obviously all that side is Victorian with the porch, and...

236. D1: Well you say, the porch itself remains as it is...

237. D2: But the steps to it will be changed...

238. D1: The access to it doesn't remain does it? That changes.

239. D3: I think. Yes, they're going to do something, but the porch stays as it is, it's just the access to it that will change. But anyway...

240. D1: But I thought they were going to change the door as well, to make it light... way through...

241. D3: The outer doors, yeah.

242. D1: The other door, so that you could see through.

243. D2: But wasn't that on the original plans with the octagonal one, there was going to be like a glass-fronted screen, you went in, you could turn left or right...
244. D1: They were on these plans as well...
245. D2: I don't think they were connected at all on the new one, were they?
246. NW: Just to put a comment in, really. From experience elsewhere I would guess that the Victorian Society would want to comment, and you ought to include them in your consultation.
247. D1: Why, because it's not a Victorian building.
248. NW: Well, bits of it are.
249. D1: Oh, are they?
250. D2: The flint side is all Victorian.
251. NW: Yeah, the [south] aisle and the porch.
252. D1: Oh, I'm sorry.
253. NW: And just so that you know they go from 1837 to, I think, 1914. So they got the Edwardian bit before the Twentieth Century Society. [laughter] And the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings I would expect those two to be the main ones that you need to consult with. So going back to your point, D3, you were saying that there were two camps.
254. D3: It did feel like that, yeah.
255. NW: And could you summarise it by saying that the English Heritage and Local Authority camp were seeing it only for its physical and artistic aspects...
256. D3: That's certainly how...
257. NW: ... and not for what the building *does* and the people within it?
258. D3: ...yes that's certainly how it seemed to me at that particular time.
259. D1: It really always surprises me. You hear so many tales about English Heritage, with other parishes and that, that given all that they do in relation to churches, that they haven't got more understanding of what they're about. You know, it always seems to be...
260. NW: Which, going back to your earlier comment is about people.
261. D1: Yes.
262. D3: Hmmmm, yes.
263. D1: Indeed.
264. D2: Christianity in many of these places is old hat now, they really aren't interested. It's purely the visual impression, the maintaining of a stately home type thing. With a stately home things are going on to preserve the actual aura of the home, but here, what goes on here, is a Christian fellowship. Very often you have to change the building around to suit your... You know, like you do in your own homes at home, you know you change them round to suit modern needs, family come along and this sort of thing.

265. D1: I personally think it's right that there are these checkpoints in place, because I think you know if everybody's perspective is *only* on what you want to do, you could actually ruin...
266. NW: Yes.
267. D1: ...you know, all kinds of things. So I think it's right that those checkpoints are there. But it almost seems that you expect to fight with English Heritage, and that says something about their lack of understanding I think about where we're coming from.
268. NW: I think just from my observation elsewhere it does also depend upon the individual officer actually...
269. D1: I'm sure.
270. NW: ... it shouldn't do...
271. D3: Perhaps it does.
272. NW: ...but it does, I think.
273. D3: Yeah that's right.
274. D1: Yes, absolutely, you know, because Malcolm Fisher is his name? the man who, he's just recently retired, but he was Prayer Book Society, and everything. He used to drive me scatty at Ringland. They worshipped there, and I used to go, when David was here I took morning prayer down there. And he would pick you up on the littlest of words. If you slipped a different word in the Lord's Prayer, or... He was absolutely pedantic about dotting i's and crossing t's, and I swear that man didn't worship, because he was too busy picking faults, and that's what it feels as if some of these folk are doing.
275. D2: They lose sight of the big plan, don't they?
276. D3: Yeah.
277. D2: Really.
278. D1: But as I've already said, I think those checks are right to be in place, because we could lose sight of the big plan as well, so you've got to negotiate with each other.
279. D2: We all need advice and guidance from people who've been down that...
280. D1: Yeah.
281. D2: ... not just on the actual shape, but the construction, everything. That's why you have professional people, isn't it, who've done this sort of thing, to give you advice, and warnings really. But it's the living church, what we seem to have a difficulty with some of these bodies, if you know what I mean. It's a workshop, for Christian service. I'm not saying you want everything made out of [laughs]... galvanised steel and asbestos roof, but you know what I mean. We need to move on, really. Whereas other churches, some of them are losing members, we really aren't. I think there's many people out there who don't come every Sunday but who would be horrified if they were looked upon as non-members of St Edmunds, or as Taverham Church. As I say on Thursdays I'm gardening here, and you'd be surprised at how many people come in here. We offer them a piece of cake and a cup of coffee. You know, the other day, it was a Wednesday afternoon, I couldn't

get here on a Thursday, there was a family, a husband and wife, I believe, and two children with them, kneeling in the pews.

282. D1: They say it's a men's working group, but it's really a men's coffee morning...

283. D2: Whether they'd had a family trauma, I don't know, but [laughter]...

284. SR: Yes.

285. D2: ...but people do come in you know. It's what we're about, isn't it?

286. NW: I know that you're only part way through the process, and maybe quite early in the process really. Is there anything you would think that you have learned since embarking on the process? Or is it too early?

287. D3: Somebody else to chair it? Definitely. [laughs]

288. D1: Yes, I suppose we've learned that it's not always right to go with the first thing that's presented.

289. D3: Yeah, because we've been with two things now...

290. D1: More than two... Because...

291. D3: But I mean we've had two architects, haven't we?

292. D1: Yes. But there was the octagonal, we've had three. Because there was one that did that lean-to.

293. D3: So that's two, so Ruth is our third.

294. D1: The octagonal, the lean-to and this one, so that's three.

295. D3: This is three.

296. D1: Yeah, but there was also quite a campaign, is perhaps a bit of a strong word, on the part of some people in our congregation. We had lots of drawings at one point, and one of them included a standalone building out there on the glebe, as a separate hall, totally separate. And we had them, all the plans, in church at some point, didn't we, and people voted on them. And there is an element who still fervently believe that.... You know I guess that seems to have mellowed a bit.

297. D2: Bob was in favour of that, wasn't he?

298. D1: Oh, very much so.

299. D2: Yeah, building on the [glebe]...

300. NW: Was Bob the previous...

301. D2: He was the previous churchwarden...

302. D1: He's died.

303. D2: ...sadly he passed away two years ago in November.

304. NW: And I think I've seen that English Heritage would rather you did something over there; is that right?

305. D1: Hmm, hmm.

306. NW: What's the drawback from your point of view about doing something on the north side?

307. D3: Well, there are a lot of graves over there on that side. It's also chalk, I don't know how easy that's going to be to build on. Have you had a walk round?

308. NW: Yes

309. D3: And also I think there are a lot of people who would be very up in arms about building on that side because, if you ask people, most people would say that was flint knapped on that side, that's the kind of image they have in their minds. But I think there are just so many positives about building on this side. And one is that it will psychologically link, whereas that [on the north side] will still be very separate.
310. NW: Because you enter the building from the south side, so yes, yes.
311. D1: But my opinion on that is that Taverham doesn't need another village hall.
312. D3: No.
313. D1: We have just done Sandy Lane, the village hall, which has got two main halls in it, and two meeting rooms. Taverham doesn't need another meeting place, in that sense.
314. D3: No.
315. D1: What the church needs is an extension of its own premises, so that we can flow into it. And I don't think that you easily flow into...
316. NW: So that's the difference between...
317. D1: ...something that's stuck out there
318. NW: ...between building on the south side which would be more of an extension, even though it is separate...
319. D1: Yes.
320. NW: ...but you can flow into, as opposed to the north which is another village hall.
321. D1: And I think we use the glebe quite a lot for different things, which is *visible* to the community. And the community come and share in those things, and it would be such a shame to move... And it's my guess, and I might be wrong, but if and when we get this, we will probably have to make some of that into a bit of a car park.
322. D2: Oh yeah, that was part of the plan.
323. D1: But we wouldn't lose it all, whereas I think if you stuck a hall in the middle of it you'd probably lose it all with access, and car parking.
324. D3: Because as a by-the-by, you know they've just redone the yellow lines out here. We've lost at least three car parking spaces, because they've extended the lines.
325. NW: I should have started this much earlier, but what sort of numbers do you get on a Sunday?
326. D1: 60?
327. D3: Anything between 60 and 90, depending on the service.
328. NW: And does that include the folk up at the vicarage.
329. D1: No, separate. That's the 10.30. 8.00 they pack it in here...
330. NW: In the chancel.
331. D1: In the chancel, you know, 20 plus...
332. NW: OK
333. D3: For 8.00. And then for 10.30...
334. D1: 60 to 80.

335. D3: ...anything between 60 and 80, 85. And plus, then we're down at the vicarage, and there's usually about 10 of us down there. And then we also have a service at 5.00 every Sunday evening as well, and we get, well depending on what it is, it would be between a dozen and 20 on Sundays at 5.00. And the Wednesday morning Communion, that's quite popular now as well.
336. D1: Messy Church is another form of worship once a month on a Tuesday.
337. D3: Yeah. And then I mean last weekend there was a baptism on Saturday and Sunday, there's about 20 weddings this year. So the building is so well used.
338. NW: Good. So a final question – a magic bullet question – if you could change – and separate answers is fine – if you could change one thing about the process of getting your building built, what might it be?
339. D2: I would say more sympathetic to what we need, rather than what they want.
340. NW: On the part of, for example, English Heritage...?
341. D2: Yeah, yeah.
342. D1: To change their hearts and minds
343. D3: Yeah.
344. D2: Yeah.
345. D1: [Laughs] So not in our control. [laughs]
346. D3: Yeah.
347. D2: No.
348. D3: Yeah, I have to say I think I would go along with D2, and say that there are just so many different people involved, that you just feel like you're pulling strands together all the time, and it's very difficult to bring it all together. And I think it's very frustrating... and I do feel quite overwhelmed by the task, because there's so much. And I suppose that I'm pretty really reliant on being guided by Ruth [Blackman], who has obviously got a lot of experience in this. But I think that's the thing, it just feels incredibly overwhelming, because there are so many people involved. You know, if you put up an extension at home, you might have a fight with your neighbours, but with this, you've got all these bodies, not just Broadland Council, you've also got the community to think about, and people have very strong opinions, even though they never come over the doorstep. And I think that's the thing that overwhelms me, that there are just so many people involved in it.
349. D1: I think one thing that... I mean I'm not sure where the recommendations came from, but we responded to go and visit a number of places, and I have to say that I think only one of them was useful, the one when we went to St Mary's. Because the other two were just so unlike anything we were doing...
350. D3: Yeah, we went to about six or seven didn't we...
351. D2: Yeah
352. D1: You know, one I can't remember... I'm thinking of the one at Long Stratton, where they put this silly porch on this church with underfloor heating, and because it was

the only warm part of the church they were sitting round having prayer meetings in it and...

353. D3: And it was a ... room...

354. D1: And it was a massive church with scope for reordering the back end...

355. D3: Yeah.

356. D2: Yeah.

357. D1: ...and they'd put this porch...

358. D2: It could have been done internally, couldn't it?

359. D1: ...and they'd put this loo in. It was crazy. And the other one was lovely, down at... uhm... off the 140, I can't think of the name of the place now...

360. D3: Oh, I know where you mean, it was lovely, yeah.

361. D1: But actually this tiny church, but they'd put a loo and a tiny kitchen in, not much bigger than that, it made it useful to the community. But it was totally different to anything... Where else did we go then?

362. D2: We went to Lingwood.

363. D1: Oh, I didn't come to Lingwood, I mustn't have been free.

364. D2: Well, that was mainly for one room, a toilet and a storage space really.

365. D1: I just wonder where those recommendations came from because the ones I went to seemed a waste of time really.

366. D3: I think Jeremy Haselock gave them to me.

367. D1: Yes, probably...

368. D3: Yeah.

369. D2: I think he did, yeah.

370. D1: So he could be a lot more thoughtful about whether they would be helpful to us.

371. NW: Who is Jeremy?

372. D3: Jeremy Haselock is the precentor at the... has he gone now I think, hasn't he?

373. D1: Has he?

374. D3: I don't know, has he? He's the precentor at the Cathedral, but he's also – I love how they put all these ministries together – [laughs] ...

375. D2: Wasn't he an ecclesiastical historian, I don't know...

376. D3: ...leader of the worship, and church extensions; he's on the DAC.

377. D2: Yeah.

378. D3: We had a chap in the Diocese of Wimborne...

379. D1: Diocese of Wimborne? [Laughs]

380. D3: Oh not Diocese of Wimborne, Diocese of Salisbury

381. D1: Elevated! [laughs]

382. D3: Who the first year we were there, the phone went on Paul's birthday, and he said, 'Oh this is Gerald Squarey, I'm the... I work for the diocese, and I've just phoned to wish Paul a happy birthday'. And I said, 'Oh, thank you very much'. And

apparently his ministry was exorcisms and phoning clergy to say 'Happy Birthday'.
[Laughs] Which was just so fantastic, you couldn't...

383. D1: Strange.

384. D3: And we used to call him 'Gerald Squarey, ministries miscellaneous'. [Laughs]

385. D1: Oh dear.

386. D3: That was what he did.

387. NW: Have you been to Holt, did you go to Holt?

388. D1: That wasn't up when we were doing this; it's been competed since.

389. D3: We haven't seen it completed.

390. D2: Ruth is the architect...

391. NW: Yes, that's right. Because there are a lot of similarities, there...

392. D1: That's the same kind of thing I think. That's the kind of thing that is useful.

393. D3: Yeah. Yeah.

394. D2: I'll tell you another thing, when I talk to Ruth or her associate, sometimes... I don't like to be callous, and think it's just to put the price up, but sometimes there's so much fuss about materials and they had to get a special sort of mixture from Portugal, and all this. Look around here. From 900 to 1900 there's all different types of cement and mortar and mix; they make too much fuss about, you know, 'It's got to be like the original'; well if it was like the original, why did the original fall down? We have to move on. There's too much 'It must be [a particular] mix'. Well all the mixtures we've got here, this is a right cosmopolitan place over a thousand years, and sometimes I think they go too far.

395. D1: Hmmm.

396. D2: A friend of mine who was once a rector at Long Stratton, before he moved into the rectory, they built him an extension on. And to match the bricks exactly to ones they had, and this was in 1991, he said the diocese paid £1 a brick to have them made. And he said, 'Have you ever...' Why couldn't they get the next nearest colour? It was on the back of the rectory; no-one saw it. And if that was a private house we'd have to do it. But it had to be, he said, £1 a brick, where a normal brick was 10p at that time. And that is... I don't know if it was an architect's whim, but that is a ridiculous waste of money. And sometimes I think they go too far, if you know what I mean. There's almost like there's... you can spend what you like as long as you aim for perfection and get it. There doesn't seem to be room for an economic compromise. Well it's going to cost you another £20,000 if you do that; we suggest... No! it's got to be this. And I think there could be a little more sensitivity on finance for churches on that sort of thing.

397. D3: Hmmm.

398. D2: Or having certain sort of mortars, because... No I think that's wrong... the previous church I came from we had an argument with, well me and the other churchwarden with the architect, one of the architects there, about mixing up on the inside of a parapet, some cement to stop water coming in through the windows. And he said, 'You shouldn't have done that; you should have mixed up

the ori[ginal]'. I said 'Well the original is what's all washed away, and that's why the water is coming in!' So, then after a little while he said...

399. D1: Do we, do we know anything about how Holt raised their money?

400. D3: I don't, no.

401. D1: Because they're a comparable congregation to us. It's...

402. D3: Yeah. Perhaps it's worth getting in touch with the churchwarden, or somebody?

403. D1: Hmmm. I just wondered, you know...

404. D3: Yeah, I don't know.

405. D1: Because I know St Mary's gave us all the places they applied to grants for...

406. NW: I think that we've probably got to the end of our, certainly of the structure here. Is there anything else any of you would like to add; it's been very helpful from my point of view.

407. D3: No I just want to wish you the best of luck in re-listening to that mess... [laughs]... to make sense of it.

408. NW: Thank you, thank you.