

**Parish Office hours:** 10am – 12 noon Monday and Friday (email or telephone only)

**Catholic Schools**

St Francis Primary School: Queen's Road, Maidstone, ME16 0LB

01622 771540

St Simon Stock Secondary School: Oakwood Park, Maidstone, ME16 0JP

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## **MAIDSTONE PARISH HALL DEVELOPMENT**

As we all know over the past year many things have had to be put on hold. On the face of it, this may appear to be what has happened to our project to provide the parish with a new hall. We were all prepared 12 months ago to commission demolition contractors to start the next phase of the project in clearing the site, however due to the Covid pandemic this was halted.

In the interim a few of the important factors relating to the project have seen some major changes, which I outline below.

Just to recap however:

Everybody in the parish thought that we had agreed a deal to enable the old classroom block to be refurbished in exchange for the sale of most of the land to a local developer as part of a wider scheme. But, when this scheme was examined by independent bodies, it was deemed that there was sufficient concern over the viability, cost, loss of amenity and sustainability of the project, that in fact it presented an unacceptable risk to the parish to proceed.

Since then, further investigations have revealed a number of points which have to be overcome in order to proceed. Some will be aware that Maidstone Borough Council have in the past few months published their Town Centre Development Plan. When this plan was examined by officers working on behalf of the parish and diocese it was discovered that our site was not considered as part of the plan. This in turn throws up a question regarding the future use and development of the site.

Additionally, the question of affordability and sustainability of a new, or