

Version revised after meeting
held on 3rd March 2009.

ST. BENEDICT'S PROJECT

GARFORTH

A Housing Scheme for Older People

REPORT OF STAGE 1 WORKING GROUP

March 2009

Introduction to Stage 1 Report

This report, finalised in March 2009, attempts to pull together the work carried out over the previous 2 years with regard to a possible housing scheme at St Benedict's RC Church, Garforth, for frail older people. There has been enthusiastic participation in the discussions by a range of people – Adult Social Care (Leeds SSD), Catholic Care (Leeds), Leeds Diocesan Curia, Leeds Irish Health and Homes, and of course most importantly the parishioners. In order not to lose the flavour of individual contributions, most of these have been presented in full – with the result that there is some repetition. Hopefully this is more useful than a succinct summary.

The report refers to the scheme as St Benedict's Project. Originally, it started as 'St Benedict's Care Project', but when it was realised that on-site care was not feasible, it became temporarily 'St Benedict's Haven'. Selecting the right name will be another task for the future.

Some key documents, such as the architect's plans cannot be put on line. Instead these have been placed in an old-fashioned lever arched Master File which can be stored by the parish until the time is right for re-consideration.

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1. Introduction/background

This section is in 2 parts:

(a) note by Anne Forbes (group facilitator)

St Benedict's is a vibrant well-established parish (1883) situated on the east side of Leeds MD, near the M1/A1. It has good access to Wakefield and Selby as well as to central Leeds. The present Church building is 11 years old, and nearby is an RC Primary School. Between the two buildings there is land (0.136 hectares or circa a quarter of an acre) owned by the Diocese of Leeds. This is currently vacant.

In recent years the parish has developed a Vision that the land should be used to provide housing for frail older people in the community, especially those who are in greatest need. This proposal has been welcomed locally, in particular by Adult Social Care (Leeds Social Services), and by local politicians (councillors, MPs), as Garforth/Swillington is one of the Leeds wards with the highest percentage of older people (36%). The 2001 census showed there were already over 1600 people aged 75+, almost half of them living alone (1). This age group is expected to expand significantly in the years to come, and is already increasingly evident in the church community.

Garforth has 7 housing projects for older people, but with the current emphasis on caring in the community (2) and the rising number of people in this age group there is no doubt that further provision of well-designed appropriate accommodation would be very welcome.

This parochial concern for the well-being of frail older people corresponds to a similar focus on the part of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales through the Caritas Social-Action Network (CSAN)(3), and with the proposed joint project between the RC dioceses of Hallam and Leeds entitled *Growing Old Grace-fully*. The Catholic Church in the USA has many such initiatives; indeed the Archdiocese of New York set up its Dept of Aging (sic) over 20 years ago. Should this housing scheme materialise, it might become a pilot venture from which other parishes and dioceses could gain relevant experience. The ageing of the population is one of the signs of the times, and the Church is challenged to respond to the needs of this growing number of people who are 'called to be old', as it did to the needs of children and families in previous generations.

First steps

After parish discussions in autumn 2006 the then parish priest Mgr Donal Lucey established a planning group (see Appendix 1 for names of members) to explore the proposed options. This group met from February 2007, visiting a range of relevant housing projects for frail older people (Leeds Jewish Welfare Board, MHA Care – Methodist Homes, St John of God).

Early on in the discussions it was hoped that an Extra Care project (see article in Master file) providing on-site care as well as housing would be possible. However, the site provided to be too small as Extra Care projects need at least 40 units for viability. It was also acknowledged at this time that the Diocese of Leeds would not be interested in selling the land or in providing housing for sale. Only units for rent were under consideration. These would be a mix of one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments (although the latter are more popular at present). Consideration might also be given provision of guest facilities, respite care, and if possible End of Life care.

In summer 2007 a feasibility study was commissioned from dha Management Ltd *to explore ways in which the land surrounding St Benedict's Church can be of use to frail older people*. The study looked at physical options for the site, the financial viability of these options, and the need for such provision in Garforth. It reported back in November 2007. Further discussions with Robin Machell (West & Machell Architects, Leeds) led to 2 possible options:

1. 6 2-roomed bungalows

or

2. 18 flats (1 or 2 bedrooms) in two-storey complexes (see design later)

Both of these options would, because of their relatively small scale, necessitate tenants having their care provided by off-site organisations (which might include Catholic Care; see later)

In August 2008 a parish meeting was held after Sunday morning mass at which these options were explained to interested parishioners (see handout in Master file). Plans were made for a Stage 2 working group, to be chaired by Bob Unwin, which would carry the proposals forward. At this time Mgr Lucey moved to Harrogate and Fr Gerard Kearney took over as parish priest.

In October 2008 a financial sub-group met to draw up possible ways of progressing the scheme (see section 7 later). However, the

deteriorating financial situation intervened, and it was felt wiser to defer all decisions until the future prospects were clearer. Hence this interim Stage 1 report.

Sources:

(1) *Baseline Needs Analysis for Older People in Support of Health and Wellbeing Strategies for Leeds City Council.* Jeanette Moore, Nigel Jones. Centre for Health and Social Care. University of Leeds. October 2006.

(2) cf Community Care Act 1990; *Leeds Older Better Strategy 2006-11;* *National Service Framework for Older People 2001.*

(3) *the Length of Days: How can the Church meet the challenge of an ageing society?* Terry Philpot. Caritas Social Action (CSAN) 2007.

(b) Genesis of St Benedict's Garforth Parish Project for Older People

Note by Margaret Siberry (parishioner)

In the late seventies Fr Damien Webb OSB established an annual mass for the sick and elderly that involved young people in welcoming and serving older people. During our parish mission in the early eighties a strong desire to continue outreach to and involvement of older people in our parish community was expressed practically with the formation of a luncheon club for older people in the parish centre which is still operating now. Over the years parishioners have been involved in administration, serving, transport and providing entertainment and outings for luncheon club members. An ongoing dimension of the luncheon club has been the support of members of the parish as well as the involvement of the primary school and post-confirmation group young people, thus maintaining the intergenerational connection.

In the early nineties St Benedict's was instrumental in establishing an ecumenical visiting programme where housebound older people were our priority. This growing commitment eventually led to the development of N.E.T., the Neighbourhood Elders Team, with funding from the local authority and a management committee from all the churches. This is now a thriving and much appreciated service within the community, with many parishioners volunteering.

When we began building the new church in the 1990s our hope was that we would be able to incorporate some form of housing for older

people; on the site of the former Church. At the time this was not possible for a variety of reasons but the desire to take forward our service of older people remained. Two years ago, after discussion with and support from the 'Parish in Council', Mgr Donal Lucey convened a small group of people to explore the possibility of using the land adjacent to the parish centre to provide a residence for frail older people that would be mindful of spiritual needs and that would endeavour to integrate resident into community life. The subsequent steps are described in (a) above.

2. Vision/rationale

(This draft Mission Statement was prepared by Monica Walker (parishioner) in September 2008).

St Benedict's is a community of 'builders'. Its Motto – 'a place to grow' – reveals something about its people and its history. A history which saw the building of three churches in four decades; a history of a strong catholic community coming out of 'exile' – celebrating mass in the school hall – to build a beautiful place of worship for our family to grow in communion with Christ.

During that exile Christ challenged us to see His presence in our neighbour, and we became a strong, inclusive and responsible people. The building of the new church led naturally to the development of the Parish Centre giving us a firm commitment to reach out and develop ministries that benefited all (see Margaret Siberry's contribution earlier).

The people of St Benedict's have a Caring Ethos and recognise the needs of the vulnerable, powerless and disadvantaged in our parish. We are an outward-looking congregation with a strong sense of mission and of 'service'. It is through 'service' that we believe God works within our lives.

Our people are young and skilled and have strong links between school, church and community. We are aware of the growing numbers of older people in our parishes and feel that we each want to be personally involved in any initiatives that will enhance their lives and provide opportunities for engagement in community life at every level.

Our Vision (prepared by Phil Davis, Brian Flynn, parishioners)

Our lives of Faith dictate that we become proactive in the lives of the elderly. As such we believe that the land between School and Church should be developed to benefit frail older people; (based on the

criteria of greatest need) – with the building of homes that will enhance the quality of their lives and the lives of all those connected with the vision.

We see the building of homes for the elderly on the land as a natural progression of building our church ten years ago. As a 'place to grow' we will continue to develop the Christian principles of charity, compassion and respect for the individual – catering for their spiritual, emotional and material welfare. Placing them right at the centre of our community puts them where their input would be valued and treated with dignity and respect.

We believe that, in realising this vision, we could be at the beginning of a pioneering venture, that if proved successful, could provide the 'blueprint' for developing this concept across the diocese.

We are excited and passionate about this project and we feel that with the professional support of Catholic Care Leeds and of the Diocese we have the team and the ideal opportunity to make this vision a reality.

3. Aims/purpose:

The key principles underlying this project are:

1. the desire to use this land for the benefit of frail older people
 2. to consider, within that group, those who are most in need
 3. to enable spiritual needs to be met, and the gifts of frail older people to be incorporated into the life of the community.
 4. to ensure that this initiative is part of a wider diocesan strategy for older people.
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4. Description of Site

This is 0.136 hectares (about a quarter of an acre) situated between the Church and the school. The land is owned by the Diocese of Leeds. It is on Aberford Rd, some 200 yards from Garforth train station.

(to be expanded)

5. Plans

(see diagram prepared by West & Machell Architects in Master File)

Contact: Robin Machell. Address: 1 Northwest Business Park, Servia Hill, Leeds LS6 2QH. Tel 0113 246 8208. Peter McHale (Catholic Care) has been the liaison person; Robin Machell worked on Catholic Care's project at Foundry Mill, Seacroft, some years ago.

6. Architecture

(More discussion needed with Robin Machell)

7. Funding

Early on it was estimated that each rental unit would cost about £100,000+ to build, so that 18 flats would cost in the region of £1.8 mill, and 6 bungalows about £700,000 (see report from dba Management Consultancy Ltd).

Such large sums might be raised through a combination of a mortgage (with diocesan agreement) and a subsidy (from whom?). How much could be raised by mortgage would depend on (a) the rents which the project was willing to charge ie higher rent equalled larger mortgage and (b) the length of the repayment period – either 25 or 40 years. (see details in Master file). However, what became clear was that if a modest rent were to be charged, even over a 40-year period, then a subsidy of at least £1 million would be needed.

The finance sub-group met in October 2008 to try to identify possible sources of such funds. The following list was produced for discussion purposes only. They have not been investigated, and their feasibility may have been overtaken by the current international financial crisis. They are listed here for future consideration:

- (i) Diocesan funds as a result of property sales elsewhere.
- (ii) shared equity/sale of flats on Garforth site
- (iii) Advanced rent payment in lump sum (eg £150,000 each) for 12 or properties who would be called 'Foundation tenants'. Other 6 properties to cover running costs through their rents. (see details in Appendix B page 14)

- (iv) partnership with either/or (a) interested religious orders
 (b) charities such as Leeds Irish Health and Homes (LIHH)
- (v) identification of wealthy donors
- (vi) parish/diocesan weekly collection for a fixed period
- (vii) public funding from either Leeds City Council or elsewhere

The same group had a discussion about the pros/cons of the Diocese of Leeds becoming a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). It was felt that this was unlikely, and would mean allocation rights being handed over to public authorities. However, partnership with an existing RSL might be possible eg LIHH are in such an arrangement with Hanover Housing. It was also noted that MHA Care (Methodist Housing, one of the leading exponent of housing for older people) have recently received £2 million from Dept of Health, in partnership with Leeds City Council, for the South Leeds Housing project for older people. MHA Development Director, Jane Barker, has been a very useful contact.

8. Governing board/governing body

Some initial suggestions from Bob Unwin:

Composition: Ex officio – diocese, Catholic Care, St Benedict’s parish representatives, other elected members

Responsibilities: policy-making, cheques and other signatures; appointments; personnel matters; appeals; matters relating to trust deed.

There will also in due course be questions of corporate identity such as:

- i. What will be the successor body to the Working Group? (If the answer is Catholic Care many of the following questions may be redundant)
- ii. Will all communications in respect of St Benedict’s Project come under the auspices of Catholic Care, or will there be a new corporate body with a distinct identity and letter-head?
- iii. Will the successor body (or Catholic Care) generate and archive all the ‘records’ in respect of St Benedict’s Project?

iv. In the unfortunate circumstances of an on-site accident/incident in one of the shared or common spaces and areas, will the ramifications and corporate (legal) liability rest with Catholic Care? Or will it reside with a new successor body?

v. Will the successor body (or Catholic Care) arrange and administer all matters/issues that require 'corporate' decisions eg

- admissions policy, and equally important, any revisions to such arrangements
- appeals
- a broad range of spatial issues – any regulations deemed necessary in respect of car-parking comes to mind.

vi. If it is the intention (if such be possible) to apply for charitable trust status for St Benedict's project, who would be the parties to the application and subsequent documentation?

9. Criteria for Admission

These should include: criteria of greatest need; needs of vulnerable, powerless, disadvantaged. What would be the definition of 'frail'?

10. Day to day administration

Further discussion needed of issues such as :

Management responsibilities; crucial role of Catholic Care (see below). On site care. Services.

Role of Catholic Care regarding St Benedict's Project
(Majella Dean, Assistant Director). July 2008.

The role of Catholic Care in the management of this project will be shaped and directed to a large extent by the parish itself. What does the parish want from an organisation such as Catholic Care? Is it housing management? Support for tenants, such as domiciliary care in their homes? Is it support to get this project through and agreed by the diocese?

Experience of Catholic Care

Catholic Care traditionally provides support services to a range of people with differing needs, including mental health problems, learning

disabilities, children, asylum seekers, homeless people, and older people. We have residential homes, and also work in the community. There is over 14 years experience of working with older people in the Huddersfield Deanery Project which provides a number of community based activities, and a depth of knowledge on issues affecting that group of people.

We also aim to respond to changing needs within the diocese, and have adapted our provision over the years to reflect this. Some of our expertise and 'bread & butter' type of work within this area is housing management and support in the form of domiciliary care. Examples are the supported living learning disability services (eg Foundry Mill Project), and mental health project (eg Bank House, Bradford).

We also work on a daily basis with commissioners (local authorities, health authorities), and are familiar with contract meetings and contract compliance. If it were helpful we would look for a way to be involved in possibly nominating tenancies for the local authority.

The Personalisation process, individual budgets, and government legislation will all have an impact on the type of on-going support to any prospective tenant. Catholic Care would be happy to be involved if this made the process easier from the point of view of the diocese ie security in knowing with whom they are working.

Catholic Care is willing to look at any proposal the parish wishes to suggest, and will be proactive in supporting any feasible ideas. Next steps: to decide what services would be required and how best to facilitate them

11. Appendices

A. Members of the Stage 1 Working Group from Feb 2007.

Mgr Donal Lucey (PP) – Chair to Sept 08
Anne Forbes (Leeds Older People's Forum) – facilitator
David Damant (Leeds Diocesan Curia)
Phil Davis (from Sept 2008)
Majella Dean (Catholic Care)
Brian Flynn (from Sept 2008)
Antony Hanlon (Leeds Irish Health & Homes)
Fr Gerard Kearney (from Sept 2008)
Peter McHale (Catholic Care)
Brian Ratner (Adult Social Services, Leeds SSD)
Margaret Siberry (St Benedict's – to Nov 07)
Bob Unwin (Chair – from Sept 2008)
Monica Walker (St Benedict's – from Nov 07)
Bill Waters (from Sept 2008)
Mark Wiggan (Catholic Care)

In September 2008 Bob Unwin took over as Chair pro-tem on the arrival of Fr Gerard Kearney as parish priest. Fr Gerard and several other parishioners joined the group at this time.

Stage 1 Working Group held its final meeting at Hinsley Hall on 3rd March 2009 when it was agreed that 3 Master copies of this report should be kept (together with the relevant Master file) by St Benedict's parish, the Diocese of Leeds (David Damant), and Catholic Care (Leeds).

Appendix B (next page)

Appendix B

Foundation tenancies: some notes for St Benedict's Housing Project.

(presented to 3rd March 2009 meeting)

Assume:

1. Construction costs of 18 units: £100k per unit. 18 units + £1.8 mill
2. All properties rental only @ £100 per week ie £5,200 pa each
3. Ignore inflation (initially)

Next steps

4. Find 12 suitable tenants (to be called Foundation tenants) willing to put £150k as a loan into a 'Trust' (to be defined). 12 x £150k = £1.8 mill for construction costs. They would pay no subsequent rent.
5. Find 6 tenants willing to pay £100 per week (£5,200 pa) – or have this amount covered by local housing allowance. 6 x £5,200 = £31,200 pa which hopefully would cover the running costs of the project.
6. Work out procedure for hand-over when a Foundation Tenant wants to leave. This would necessitate re-payment of their loan, and its replacement by a loan from a new occupant. Implications of inflation at this stage important.

Some tenants and/or their families may not require total re-imburement of £150k and may be able consequently to leave a donation for future use.

7. None of this is feasible until prospective tenants can sell their present homes.
8. £150k may be variable (some people paying more, some less, depending on their means) but it is essential that a total of £1.8 mill be obtained.
9. NB. Anyone who loans £150k into the 'Trust' is sacrificing the interest on that money for the duration of their stay at the Project. At 4% interest pa (net) this would amount to £6000 pa.
10. The 'Trust' could be a diocese-wide initiative, so that any surplus from one scheme might be able to assist another such scheme in a less affluent area.

