Notes of open meeting held at 8pm on June 21st 2023 to discuss the sale of St John’s church.

Present: Cllr’s Gwyneth Davies (Chair), Clare Rooke, Amanda Williams, Christian Pateman, Alan Wilkinson and Sheena Duller

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Matthew Sims, Ifan Jones Evans, the Clerk, Ian Williams and Cllr Wyn Evans, as well as Mrs. Jane Lloyd Jones.

Gwyneth Davies explained the background to all those present (18 members of the public) and read out the correspondence that we have received, and sent, to Michael Plane of the church estates. Mr Plane had contacted Cllr Wyn Evans on the 12th June with prior notification of the sale but details were general. The community council replied immediately with concerns about the sale including future access and burial area. Mr. Plane replied by email that it had all been discussed and finalised that the sale would progress with the available ground surrounding the church split 40/60, and a new parking area created to the west of the path leading to the church. Contact we have had with the Church warden and the church estates department suggests each one is claiming we need to discuss with the other. The community council wrote to Canon Eileen Davies and received a reply that was short, not to the point and inaccurate (this was read out in the meeting).

Henry White a former church warden explained that our church in Wales area is comprised of 13 churches and this LMA is administered from Llanrhystud, but it was the Representative Body in Cardiff that decided on the division of the curtilage. Malcolm McNevin also spoke to say there were 3 original options: to sell, to sell with extra land, and not to sell; although he was opposed to the sale, the upkeep of 2 churches on the site is not practical.

The resident of Tir na Nog, Jen Jones, which shares a stone wall boundary with the church yard, also expressed her concerns.

Questions were raised about the need for archeological work especially on the new parking site as it is within the curtilage of the older church.

Consensus was achieved in the meeting that:

1. The Canon be invited to a site meeting, with Mr Plane and the LMA team;
2. No land should be lost to burials;
3. The current carpark be retained, as it is level. There is also no guarantee it would be reinstated or replaced following the sale.

Members of the public were invited to stay on for the monthly Community Council meeting, if they were residents of the community.