

Final push as project transforms building

IT'S a case of 'three down, one to go' at St Cuthbert's in Copnor.

This handover of keys marks the end of the third phase of the ambitious £4.2m project to redevelop the Portsmouth church. Now there's only one phase to go before the parish's dream becomes reality.

The latest part of the project to be completed is the creation of seven community rooms in the centre of the Hayling Avenue building. Nine months of building work on this £920,000, four-storey complex was completed last month. The ground floor will house a new, purpose-built children's centre, including a pre-school playgroup, while community and church groups will use rooms on other floors.

The first two phases of the project saw a GPs' surgery built at the east end of the church, and the church hall replaced by housing. The final phase will involve the creation of a worship area at the west end of the building, and a new community café created in an extension on the Lichfield Road side.

The vicar, the Rev David Power, said: "A lot of people in Copnor have links with St Cuthbert's because of the occasions they and their families have shared there. The church has been out of use for four years and I am frequently asked: 'When will the church be finished?'"

"We are now working hard to re-open the church, with a beautiful new place of worship created within the existing building. Grant funding is likely to be hard to find for the next phase, so we are launching an appeal to raise £210,000 to complete the place of



The Rev David Power in the Bradbury Suite



worship, with the intention of beginning the final phase of construction during 2008."

Worshippers, who have held services in a local school for four years, will return to their church building in January. They will use a 100-seater room on the top floor of the community complex until their new worship area is completed. The ceiling of this stunning room, the Bradbury Suite, is the original dome at the centre of the 1915 building.

The second floor includes the Poppy Room, which can be used for meetings of 25-30 people, and four smaller meeting rooms. The first floor has not yet been completed – the church is still looking for a partner organisation that might want to finish the room and use it.

And the Corner Pre-School, which met in a room above the Baffins Surgery, has now moved into the children's centre on the ground floor. It can now use the kitchen, disabled toilets and out-

door play area there. The pre-school, which has 45 children on its books, was the first in the city to be named by inspectors as "outstanding".

Pre-school manager Jacquie Jolliffe, said: "It's going to be a lot better for the children to have their own room, and somewhere to play outdoors. Where we were upstairs involved having to pack everything away again at the end of each session."

The architects for this phase of



Site manager Glyn Ingram hands keys to the community complex to the Rev David Power

the project were the Lee Evans Partnership, and building work was carried out by DM Habens. The vicar praised both for their professionalism.

The creation of the 200-seater worship area and the community café will cement the sense of partnership that permeates the entire project. The café will be a single-storey extension that will also serve as an entrance to all three parts of the new building – the surgery, the community complex and the worship area. It will be open six days a week and serve Fairtrade, healthy food and drink, with a sensory garden alongside.

The project pre-dated our diocese's Kairos initiative, but illustrates its principles of working in partnership with the community and using our buildings effectively as part of our mission and discipleship.

Anyone who would like to contribute to the final phase of the project can contact David on 023-9282 7071 or send donations to him at 2 Lichfield Road, Portsmouth, PO3 6DE.

Readers examine our Celtic heritage

READERS from across the diocese will reconnect with our Celtic Christian roots as part of their annual conference.

The Rev Ray Simpson, from the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, will be the key speaker at the get-together, from January 25-28 on the Isle of Wight.

He is the author of *Exploring Celtic Christianity*, the founding guardian of the international Community of St Aidan and St Hilda, and the principal tutor of the Celtic Christian studies programme.

He will introduce elements of his multi-resource course, *The Transforming Church Experience*, which will be published shortly after the conference. Ray will be joined by two other members of the community, who will share the leading of worship and workshops.

The conference is entitled 'Roots For Renewal', and will also include the chance to experience Celtic worship, a light-hearted quiz, discussion and a closing Eucharist.

After the success of inviting lay people to the Diocesan Conference, the Readers will invite 20 clergy to join them for their conference. It will be held in the Carlton Hotel, Sandown.

Warden of Readers Canon David Isaac said: "This will be a great chance to re-connect with some of the oldest forms of Christian spirituality for English-speaking people. I'm looking forward to it immensely."

Readers are advised to return their booking forms, with payment, to Hilary Spurgeon, by December 17.

Let's offer bishops our hospitality

IT'S an ideal opportunity for us to show our hospitality to fellow Christians from around the world.

Bishops and archbishops from across the Anglican Communion will come to the UK for the 2008 Lambeth Conference – and we can help to make them feel welcome.

Our diocese has been asked to host 24 bishops in the days leading up to the conference, from July 10-15. Most of those visiting our diocese come from our link dioceses in Ghana,

but some are from Nigeria some from the USA.

The team overseeing our hospitality arrangements is organising an event in our cathedral on July 12, and hopes that guest bishops will take part in Sunday services in parishes on July 13.

Worshippers who are hosting bishops will also be encouraged to spend a day showing their guests some of the local sights. Each deanery may put aside a small budget for this.

The Rev Mark Rodel, who is chairing the hospitality group, said: "Hospitality is a vital part of our Christian ministry to our brothers and sisters from overseas. We want our visitors to feel as welcome as possible."

Each of our eight deaneries is being asked to co-ordinate hospitality arrangements for three bishops each. Anyone with further queries can contact Mark Rodel on 023-9287 7405 or curate@stjudes-southsea.org.uk