You may be aware that at the Congregational Board yesterday evening we discussed the proposed alterations to the interior of the church as part of our Heritage Lottery Project. Very many thanks to all who came to the recent meeting to hear about, and express views on, the options; and also to those who sent in their thoughts and suggestions all of which were circulated to Board members beforehand. It was good to have so many responses. All issues raised were considered by the Board and there was a very detailed discussion.

I can inform you that, after much thoughtful and prayerful consideration, the Board has decided to proceed with the (slightly modified) second option proposed by our architect. This is the option that involves removing the pews, shortening and lowering the chancel and removing the chancel rail. There is a copy of this plan attached.

Modifications that we will be asking to be included are:

- To retain a small number of the pews and have these free-standing so that they can be moved and included in seating arrangements
- Instead of lowering the chancel to a single step, to have it a little higher with two steps

In addition, there will be further consideration and discussion on a few features before we reach a final decision on them, including:

- Whether there is a need for two toilets suitable for wheelchair users
- The position and the suggested use of glass for the partition wall to what is currently the Hall of Fellowship
- The servery. Some members will visit one or two churches to view their serveries

The project will not involve changes to the box pews.

This was not an easy decision and I am very much aware that it will not please everyone. Many strongly held views were expressed at the meeting but the Board is united in its resolve to work together as we take these proposals forward in conjunction with the substantial repairs to make the church wind and watertight. We would greatly appreciate your help and support. If you would like any more information about the project, please contact me on gunnell@grange1601.plus.com or John Drabble (Clerk to the Board) on jdрабble@btinternet.com.

Yours,

Peter Gunnell
Congregational Board Chairman.