

The Diocese of Bunbury

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO PAROCHIAL BUILDINGS AND/OR FURNISHINGS IN CHURCHES

i) No structural alterations affecting the stability or general plan of the church or any other parochial building and no addition thereto nor any erection, renewal, alteration, addition to, or removal of, memorials, ornaments, furniture or fittings of the church shall be made without the consent of the parish council, the churchwarden, the Parish Priest, the Diocesan Trustees and the Bishop. When applying for the consent of the Bishop and Trustees, the Parish Priest and the churchwardens shall lodge with the Diocesan Secretary for filing at Church Office a copy of the plan and specifications of every building to be erected and of every alteration or addition to be made to existing structures, and/or a detailed description together with sketches or photographs, of any memorials, ornaments, furniture or fittings to be added to or removed. Accompanying every application there must be a statement of costs and how these will be met.

ii) Thirty clear days before application for permission is made an exact copy of the proposed application shall be affixed in clear view of parishioners at or near the normal main entrance to the parish church. Objections or amendments to the proposed application shall be lodged with the churchwardens at any time during the thirty days and all such shall be considered by the parish council before the application is lodged. Details of all objections shall accompany the application.

(Clause 12c, P19-17) – The Parochial Statute 1994-2006)

This form completed in duplicate, signed by the Parish Priest and Churchwardens, is to be sent to the Diocesan Secretary, PO Box 15, Bunbury, WA 6231, and must be received at least seven (7) working days prior to a Council meeting to enable the faculty to be approved at that meeting. **The consent of the Bishop and The Bunbury Diocesan Trustees cannot be given until at least seven days after the application has been received.**

The Diocese of Bunbury

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO PAROCHIAL BUILDINGS AND/OR FURNISHINGS IN CHURCHES

Parish of **Denmark Walpole**

Consent required for **Replacement of church pews**

In the Church of **St Leonard's, Denmark**

Displayed 18 August to 18 Sept 2024

Please pass any Amendments or Objections to Church wardens

SCOPE

1. We seek a faculty to replace the existing pews with new custom designed pews and chairs.
2. This follows on from a faculty obtained in 2021 to modify an unsafe pew with a view to improving the comfort and stability of the remaining pews if this proved successful. In that faculty we indicated that, if the experiment proved impractical, we would then seek a faculty to “to replace the existing pews with commercially available short pews and/or chairs of a design to be decided by Parish Council.” This being the case we now present a proposal to replace the existing pews.

SITUATION

3. ***We believe the pews need replacing for the following reasons:***
 - *Safety:* Most are quite unstable, prone to tipping, creak due to lack of midspan support, and are potentially unsafe. Some years ago they were screwed into the floor to prevent tipping, but the screws are now becoming loose and we are reluctant to further damage the wooden floor with further fixtures.
 - *Poor Ergonomics:* The seat is narrow, there is no lower back support and the rail hits the upper spine at an awkward height and angle. This is exacerbated by the narrowness of the bookshelf as open books impinge on those in front. Comments are regularly made by visitors who joke (or even believe) the church has made them as some kind of penance! Many prefer to sit at the back in plastic chairs, leading to empty spaces at the front.
 - *Fixed:* Being fixed in place they cannot be moved to cater for different uses of the space.
 - *Aesthetics and quality of seating:* Moreover, a motley collection of chairs have been added over time which are also in varying stages of repair and detract from the beauty of the church interior.
4. **Parish Discussion:**

Parish Council constituted a sub-committee in 2021, and a new sub-committee has built upon this work in 2024. Because this is a sensitive issue, the Rector flagged the matter at the 2021 and 2024 AMPs and during Notices and in pew sheets. Following this, some concerns about the change were informally raised by a few, and we have assured parishioners that we are looking at timber pews that will enhance the beauty of the space, as well as highlighting safety issues. Informal positive responses have also been aired. Since advertising this faculty application 18 August – 18 September 2024 ... *[insert any feedback from display of faculty]*.

HISTORY

5. Brief history of St Leonard's:

Built in **1895** using voluntary labour on land donated by Millars timber milling company, who also provided the structural timber at a reduced cost. It is one of the oldest wooden churches still in use in Western Australia.

The pews were installed c1920 A pre 1914 photo shows chairs in use. Three short choir pews were installed in 1914 (two are now against the walls of the sanctuary to prevent tipping). The longer pews were installed c1914 -1929, possibly 1920 along with other items of furniture.^{1 2} The bookshelves appear to have been added much later and stained to match. The Diocese has advised there is no mention of pews in any Denmark Faculty held by them.

- **Made by who** – Unknown. The choir pews were made by Mr F G Sergeant of Denmark whose tender for 'some items' was accepted in 1914.
- **Type of Wood used** - We suspect the pews were made using a mixture of Jarrah, Oregon Pine & Nyatoh/Mahogany.
- **Present seating capacity** – St Leonard's presently has capacity for about 84 persons in 12 pews plus additional chairs for about 20; total about 104.

ANALYSIS

6. Value of seating in terms of:

- a. **Age** – Being in the order of 100 years old, they are of historical interest but not contemporary with the opening of the church.
- b. **Rarity** – the type of wood used in the current pews is generally unavailable in these sizes & quantities – though it is still feasible to source local native timber for replacement seating.
- c. **Quality** – the pews are of mediocre rustic quality, and basic design. Joints are rickety & the centres of each pew seat are generally unsupported except where additional legs have been screwed & glued on within the last ten years or so. They are notoriously uncomfortable as noted above.
- d. **Relationship to building** – the church is not Gothic, but the arch & the inner entrance doors may be a nod to that. People probably thought the Gothic style for the pew ends looked 'churchy'. The colour is not in keeping with the Baltic pine of the interior walls but does not appear to overly clash with it, although it possibly makes the church interior darker than it needs to be.
- e. **Contribution to building's overall character** – the Gothic arches at the end of the pew rows lead the eyes naturally towards the altar table & sanctuary. The wooden chairs presently in the church are a mixture of styles and ages which do not match the pews & arguably do not contribute to the ambience of the interior. The brown plastic chairs are strictly utilitarian & greatly detract from the atmosphere of the church interior.

¹ R.W. Mumford, *St Leonard's Anglican Church 1896-1988* (c1980?)

² *A Conservation Plan for St Leonard's Church, Denmark*, prepared by Lynne Farrow with Erickson & Taylor, 2012, p. 22, p. 24

7. Heritage Significance:

- a. **St Leonard's Heritage status:**
 - On 24 Oct 2003 the Heritage Council of WA advised that St Leonard's '*does not warrant further assessment for consideration for entry in the Register of Heritage Places*'. The Register Committee believed that although it may not be of State significance, it may have local significance.
 - St Leonard's is listed in the Shire of Denmark's *Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places*. Only the structure is described - and no furnishings are mentioned.
 - St Leonard's is recognised by the Australian Heritage Commission & listed on the Register of the National Estate.

- b. **Conservation Plan (2012) and significant features:** A Conservation Plan was commissioned in 2012.³ It lists a number of internal elements of '*considerable or exceptional significance*' and highly recommends their conservation. These include the Baltic pine internal walls, hand hewn floorboards & sanctuary arch and furniture such as the pews. It might be noted, however, that the author includes items such as plant stands whose significance is highly debatable, and the pulpit which was of comparatively recent construction and has since been removed with a Faculty. In 2021 the Denmark Shire Senior Town Planner said removal of pews was not advisable under the terms of the Conservation Plan and that it would be "highly advisable to seek independent advice from a heritage or conservation specialist." (email from Jasmine Tothill to Jane James cc Crag Pursey (Shire of Denmark) 31 May 2021) The committee fully respects the heritage significance of St Leonard's, but is also concerned for the church to be an ongoing place of worship, not a museum, with attention given to safety, comfort, and adaptability of use. The committee hope to obtain a favourable opinion of the proposed new furniture from a suitably qualified expert.

- c. **Impact of changing or replacing the pews:** Replacing the pews would change the atmosphere & ambience of the church interior and remove a link with the past. Some long term parishioners may feel concerned with any suggested change but other parishioners have welcomed it – not only from a comfort and safety point of view – but aesthetically as well. *[Insert any feedback from display of faculty]* It is envisaged that quality timber furniture would be a smooth transition – subtly updating the interior but maintaining a sense of tradition and solidity.

³ *ibid.*, p.100.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

8. The committee has extensively researched ready-made options both nationally and overseas. These have been discounted as being either too expensive, stylistically 'stodgy,' and/or made from rainforest timber. Some UK options were appealing but we would prefer to use a local manufacturer and local materials.

We have approached a local fine-furniture maker, Allan Gledson of **Frenchman Bay Woodworks** (<https://www.frenchmanbaywoodworks.com.au/>) based on the quality of workmanship and emphasis on custom design. We have a preliminary quote based on a basic design. Once we have the go-ahead, there would be a consultation process to refine the design, including testing of mock-ups. He has visited the church and we have tried his standard dining chair which was very comfortable and elegantly made. He has provided us with samples of possible timbers.

Guidelines for New Seating

- *High quality construction* to last at least another 100 years
- *Ergonomic* and stable design is essential.
- *Classic Style* – a beautiful, timeless and elegant design to enhance the sacred space. We are leaning away from an overtly Gothic or fussy style toward, as stated above, subtly updating the interior while maintaining a sense of tradition and solidity. The sanctuary arch is a very pleasing focal point and the new seating should complement, or not distract from, this focal feature.
- *Material*: Sustainably harvested timber. Parish Council prefers blackbutt which will give a lighter feel to the space and feels it will blend well with the variety of timbers in use (Baltic pine, oak, jarrah, karri)
- *Comfortable without upholstery* - due to hygiene and maintenance issues.
- *Book storage* is required: possibly a box at seat or back level. Under seat storage is not preferred for people with mobility issues.
- *Flexibility*: A combination of shorter movable pews and chairs (some with arms for those needing support) will allow for moving seating into circular or semi-circular arrangements in the sanctuary, or other areas for small gatherings, and for alternative layouts as church needs change.
- *Capacity*: Present seating capacity is about 104 with a combination of pews & seats. Replacing them with seats & short pews would possibly maintain this capacity or slightly less.

COST

9. Frenchman Bay Woodworks has quoted **\$150,000** for blackbutt. This includes 25 three-seater pews, 16 chairs and 16 chairs with arms. This configuration may change.

We sought a comparative price from Port Jarrah in Fremantle who have made pews for Christchurch Grammar and Trinity College – \$3950 for a three-seater jarrah pew.

10. Budget:

The cost of this submission will be met mainly from Retained Earnings which the parish has been building in recent years thanks to the successful operation of the Mustard Seed Op Shop.

The Parish's Statement of Financial Position 31 July 2024 is below. This shows that on 31 July 2024, the Parish had \$97,706 available on-call and \$253,057 in a Term Deposit Account maturing 6 December 2024.

Parish Council also intends to set up a Capital Works Fund: Saint Leonards Pews Fund (SLPF) to receive donations. Parish Council will apply to Bishop-in-Council to grant an exemption from Diocesan Assessment on donations received into this Capital Works Fund.

Statement of Financial Position 31 July 2024

Category	Ac #	Account Name	1 Jan 2024	31 Jul 2024
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
	14673	ACF Operating Account	\$21,233	\$22,501
	14674	ACF Cash Management Ac	\$57,825	\$75,205
	14700	ACF Term Deposit Ac	\$203,590	\$253,057
		Sum ACF accounts	\$282,648	\$350,762
	14800	Undeposited Funds	\$4,068	
	14810	Accounts Receivable	\$1,915	\$295
	14910	Energy Bill Relief	\$1,975	\$1,739
TOTAL ASSETS			\$290,607	\$352,796
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY				
Liabilities				
	21100	Accounts Payable	\$162	\$0
	21130	HEF Interest Free Loan	\$1,250	\$0
	21270	Emergency Relief Fund	\$2,020	\$5,120
	21271	MS Shop Equipment Fund	\$460	\$351
		Total Liabilities	\$3,892	\$5,471
Equity				
	31000	Retained earnings	\$222,377	\$286,715
		Current Year	\$64,337	\$60,610
		Total Equity	\$286,715	\$347,325
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY			\$290,607	\$352,796

OLD PEWS

11. Allan Gledson has indicated that it would be inefficient to re-use the timber in the old pews for the new seating.

12. Due to safety concerns it is not anticipated that the old pews could continue to be used unless placed against a wall. We could consider, for example, retaining the two in the sanctuary and/ or hall as a nod to the past along with some of the older chairs.

The remainder might be sold, with first option to parishioners.

Alternatively, if a suitable storage can be found, the timber could be stored for a future project, such as built in cupboards in the vestry rooms, smaller objects of furniture, or countertops etc if a new Mustard Seed Op Shop is ever constructed.

ATTACHMENTS

- Current Layout
- Quote Frenchman Bay Woodworks
- Example of FBW furniture

We, the undersigned, hereby consent to this application.

Dated this day of 20.....

Parish Priest

Churchwarden

Churchwarden

Churchwarden

The Bunbury Diocesan Trustees hereby consent to this application.

Dated this day of 20.....

Chairman

Secretary

I,, Bishop of Bunbury hereby consent to this application

As witness Our hand this day of 20.....

ATTACHMENTS



Above: Current Layout – note assorted chairs, 2 styles of pews in main body of church with total lack of back support, and long unsupported seat span. Currently nailed into floor to stop tipping but coming loose.

Left: Bookshelves (later addition) are too narrow and open books impinge on those in front.

Below: 3rd and 4th style of pews, Both prone to tipping.





Thank you for your recent enquiry with Frenchman Bay Woodworks.
Please find your customised proposal below.

Name: St. Leonard's church, Denmark
Proposal number: P1164rev1 **Proposal date: 16.6.24.**

Design One.

- Custom bench pew (x24)
- Solid hardwood throughout
 - 3 seater
 - Ergonomically designed
 - Book box to back of pew
 - Tessellating design to fit with other benches and chairs
 - Hardwax oil finish (easy care and maintenance)
 - Dimensions WxDxH (+/-5mm): 1500x585x820 mm

Design Two.

- Custom chair (x16)
- Solid hardwood throughout
 - Curved seat and backrest
 - Ergonomically designed
 - Book box to back of chair
 - Tessellating design to fit with other benches and chairs
 - Hardwax oil finish (easy care and maintenance)
 - Dimensions WxDxH (+/-5mm): 510x585x820 mm

Design Three.

- Custom armchair (x16)
- Solid hardwood throughout
 - Curved seat and backrest
 - Shaped armrests
 - Ergonomically designed
 - Book box to back of chair
 - Tessellating design to fit with other benches and chairs
 - Hardwax oil finish (easy care and maintenance)
 - Dimensions WxDxH (+/-5mm): 560x585x820 mm

Delivery: Complimentary to St. Leonard's church, Denmark

Price guide:

- Walnut - \$175,000**
Jarrah - \$155,000
Blackbutt - \$150,000

Frenchman Bay Woodworks
Unit 13/370A Albany Highway, Albany, Western Australia, 6330.
Mobile: 0455 282 216
Web: frenchmanbaywoodworks.com.au
Email: allan@frenchmanbaywoodworks.com.au
Bank name: NAB - Account Number: 97 420 0983 - BSB: 088 554
ABN: 31881227007



THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF WORK BY FBW & NOT THE FINAL DESIGN – which will be fully customised as chairs and benches with book storage. A sample will be provided to test before proceeding with manufacture.
NB these are very comfy!

The configuration indicated in quote may change as the design evolves.