

## Move to St Peters Parish Hall

### Statement from the Chairman

Dear Members

I know the announcement on Tuesday that we are moving premises may have come as a shock and disappointment to some members.

I will herewith set out the reasons behind the move and why it is the best interests of the club.

We moved to Bushey Sports Club some years ago after the Beechen Grove Baptist Church decided to double the rent and the Parking was becoming increasingly complicated. Although the Bushey Sports Club venue is very good with ample parking, we had no security of tenure as the previous management were unwilling to enter into a formal rental agreement. We were only signed up to use the small conference room (14 tables at a push), and because the club grew following the move, we were given use of the Ballroom on a grace and favour basis. Not only do we run duplicate sessions on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, but we have teaching and Supervised play sessions. The previous management also had the habit of moving the venue of our sessions without notice, which did not build confidence in their management style.

The previous management left in November 2019 and we met with the new centre manager Mr David Rees in December. He had been appointed by the directors to save the club as it was a very precarious financial position with a closure notice being a very distinct possibility and therefore with an uncertain future. As you can appreciate the future of such a club on a prime site must remain in doubt in these times. For us, this meant that our bridge club may have an even more uncertain future without a stable base. Not only this but the club was also informed that its rent would increase from the current £12,000 per annum to £22,500 per annum, an increase of 87.5%. We were advised this was the minimum rent that was acceptable from January onwards. We were also informed that the conference room (now rebranded as the Studio) was an ideal venue for classes such as Pilates and Zumba at £50 per hour, it would also be mirrored (which is far from ideal for us), and that we would lose our slots, if and when, such classes came along. Not only this, we were also told that Fridays would increasingly be marketed as a party night (this had already been having a most detrimental effect on Friday night attendances), and there did not appear to be any great willingness to let us use the ballroom on a Tuesday evening, even if it was free. With all these factors combined, the Committee could only reluctantly conclude that the future of our club at this site was completely untenable.

We were also informed that car parking charges were to be introduced to the centre, a retrograde step in the committee's view, but obviously a quick revenue generator for the Sports Club.

The Committee therefore decided, based on the above, that it was prudent that they looked for alternative venues for the club, as we could find ourselves homeless in six to nine months, and the rent payments at the current venue are unsustainable.

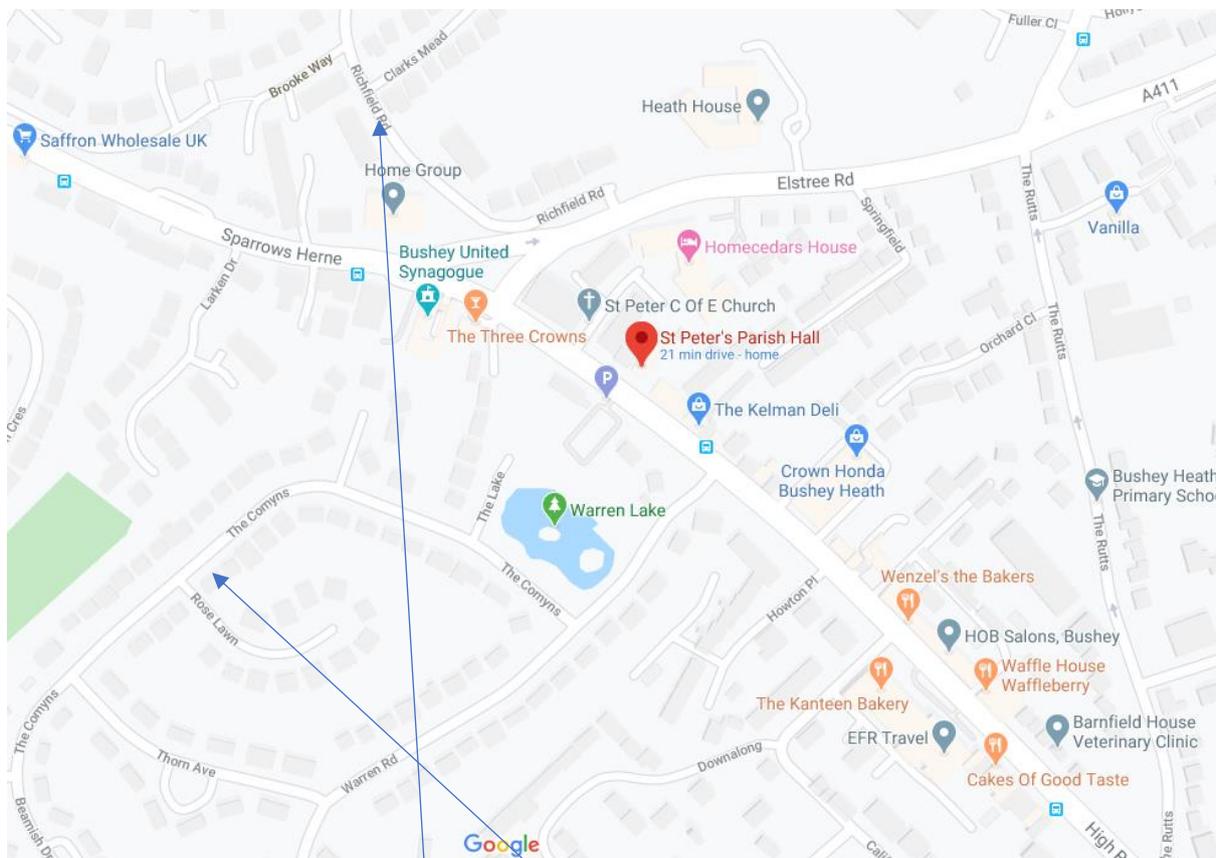
We went to various community centres and leisure centres, and the one that was most amenable to the number of sessions that we currently run was St Peter's Parish Church Hall.

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Gentle		Lessons	Social Duplicate	
Afternoon			Supervised play	Lessons	
Evening		Duplicate and Social Duplicate		Lessons	Duplicate

The venue is not perfect, but it is well managed, and we feel confident that we will be able work with the management to solve any initial problems. We have had to compromise on a few items: Thursday Duplicate will move from Morning to Afternoon, though we are hopeful this may be only temporary, since the current incumbent of the Thursday morning booking may be retiring (watch this space). Monday Gentle may be limited to eight tables due to space constraints, but we are working on this.

However, with rent at a manageable £13,000 and security of tenure, we felt that this is the best solution to secure the stability of the club going forward.

Regarding parking near the new venue. Yes, there are parking charges in the car park opposite, but parking is free for blue badge holders, and after 6.30 pm, and for those prepared to walk for 2-3 minutes there is always free parking on neighbouring streets.



There is free parking in Richfield Road and The Comyns.

There are several establishments in the vicinity where you can go and get a meal/coffee/beer to discuss the hands after play, most notably the Three Crowns opposite.

The committee will hopefully also be able to reintroduce free tea and coffee in the new venue, assuming we have a cohort of volunteers to administer this.

I hope you will agree that the committee have acted in the best interests of securing the clubs future going forward in the short and medium term, and that you will embrace the move to the new venue.

Yours Sincerely

David Eddleston

Chairman

Watford and Bushey Bridge Club