



Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

MEDIA STATEMENT

17 February 2015

Bishopscourt

Consideration of the future of Bishopscourt has been ongoing for many years, and discussion is underway on future use or sale of the property.

Following resolution 16.3[^] of the 2014 Diocesan Synod regarding Bishopscourt, a resolution will be considered by the Diocesan Council at its meeting on 26th February 2015.

The property was recently tenanted following the decision in 2013 for the Bishop and Mrs Thompson to reside in leased accommodation^{^^}. The Bishopscourt lease has now expired and the tenant has been asked to vacate.

Bishopscourt is currently acknowledged in local heritage listings in regards to the driveway, grounds and garden. The building itself is not listed under heritage listings.

Matters regarding Bishopscourt are separate to those of Christ Church Cathedral, and the residence is not a parish property. The Diocese has had ongoing conversations with clergy throughout the years, and Bishop Greg Thompson discussed the matter at the 2014 Diocesan Synod.

[Ends]

[^]16.3 Bishopscourt

"That this Synod notes that the Diocesan Council will during the course of this Synod give consideration to the possible sale of Bishopscourt and the purchase or development of another property to be used as a residence for the Bishop of Newcastle"

^{^^}Bishopscourt is currently leased. The Bishop and Mrs Thompson reside in leased accommodation arranged to ensure that it is within reasonable travel distance of the Cathedral, the Diocesan Office and transport routes.

Please direct all media enquiries to:

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BISHOPSCOURT: RESPONSES 17 FEBRUARY 2015

When will the property be offered for sale?

The Diocesan Council will be considering the sale at the meeting on 26th February 2015.

Why is the property being offered for sale?

It is currently not being offered for sale; however the sale will be considered at the Diocesan Council meeting.

Does the property have heritage listings which might preserve the current building from any sort of redevelopment?

We are not aware of any major limitations, however in any case the church does not propose to redevelop the site and should it be listed for sale in the future, purchasers will need to make their own enquiries.

Is the property still occupied or has it sat empty since the new bishop decided to live elsewhere?

The property was recently tenanted following the decision in 2013 for the Bishop and Mrs Thompson to reside in leased accommodation. The Bishops court lease has now expired and the tenant has been asked to vacate.

Has the sale been discussed with parishioners?

The property has yet to be approved for sale and will be decided at the Diocesan Council meeting. However Synod members (elected members of each parish) discussed the issue at the 2014 Synod and passed the following motion:

16.3 Bishops court

“That this Synod notes that the Diocesan Council will during the course of this Synod give consideration to the possible sale of Bishops court and the purchase or development of another property to be used as a residence for the Bishop of Newcastle”

Since then Synod representatives have received further correspondence about the upcoming Diocesan Council meeting in accordance with the ordinance. (Letter has been supplied)

Who made the decision to sell the property?

The property is currently not being offered for sale; however the matter will be discussed at the upcoming Diocesan Council meeting.

Does the diocese need to sell the property to meet some financial obligations?

No, it does not have anything to do with the Diocese's financial obligations, but rather the ongoing needs of the current and future Bishop's residence.

Are there other properties owned by the diocese which may also be offered for sale?

The Diocese has a large property portfolio and regularly purchases and sells properties to meet its ministry needs.

Would any proceeds of the sale be put towards the recently-revealed cathedral plans?

Matters regarding Bishops court are separate to those of Christ Church Cathedral, and the residence is not a parish property.



3 February 2015

Dear Synod Member,

Further to resolution 16.3 of the 2014 Diocesan Synod regarding Bishopscourt, please be advised that the following resolution will be considered by the Diocesan Council at its meeting on 26th February 2015:

"In accordance with the Management of the See Endowments Ordinance 2013, this Diocesan Council approves the sale of Bishopscourt upon such terms and conditions as approved by the Trustees of Church Property."

Yours sincerely

John Cleary
Diocesan Business Manager
Secretary to the Diocesan Council



MEDIA ADVISORY

25 November 2013

After much discussion and careful consideration Bishop Greg Thompson (Newcastle Bishop Elect) and wife Kerry have made the decision not to live in Bishops court as they commence their ministry in the Diocese of Newcastle.

While recognising that Bishops court is an extraordinary property and holds a special place in the hearts of many the question was asked if its continued use as a home primarily for two people was the best way for this property to serve the many and diverse needs of a modern Diocese.

"There has been a realisation in many dioceses that the grand house that served so well another age needs to give way to more practical housing that serves the needs of the current era. Bishops court Newcastle is a magnificent house but it requires costly annual management and maintenance. Rather than begin our ministry in the house and then ask the Diocese to consider a change I have come to the view that I would be best able to begin ministry among you in a different way," Bishop Thompson said.

Bishop Peter Stuart, with the support of the Diocesan Council, has therefore arranged a 12 month lease on a 3 bedroom apartment in Merewether and has set up a process of reviewing the future use of Bishops court with the timeframe of decisions being made before the end of 2014.

In 2014 the budget for maintenance, cleaning and gardening of Bishops court would be somewhere in the region of \$75,000. Bishop Greg will be involved in the review of Bishops court which will get underway in February.

[Ends]

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