

HALLOW HISTORY ARCHIVES



Old Church versus new church. Decision time.

On July 28 1859 a meeting was held to consider the state of repair of the 30-year-old Hallow Church in the Old Churchyard and the Chapel of Ease at Broadheath and make a rate for those two buildings for the coming year. As usual those who lived in cottages with a rateable value of less than £6 p.a. would be excused from that rate. Three weeks later another Meeting decided not to pull down and rebuild the Church, but to request that Joseph Fortey, a local builder, examine the foundations and report back to them. The result of that report was not fully minuted in the Hallow Select Vestries book, but it was adopted, except that the Church should not be painted and that the Church Porch would be repaired with cement and not Bath Stone. Little did the parishioners know then that it would be almost 10 years before the Parish had a new church which would be consecrated on 4th May 1869.

During those 10 years a Church rate fluctuated between 2d and 1d each year and whether to repair or replace the Church was still being discussed. In December 1864 more concerns were raised and it was agreed that an effort should be made “to raise sufficient funds for rebuilding it altogether”. It was agreed that a “New Church Building Committee” should be set up.

In September 1865 the Vicar Rev Herbert G Pepys and 46 Parishioners from Hallow, Henwick, Comer and Lower Broadheath (all within the parish of Hallow at that time), plus Hallow landowners who lived elsewhere, met to discuss again what should be done about building a new Church, Mr J P Lord who owned Park Farm and Mr E Lechmere Pugh a solicitor and local landowner who lived in Britannia Square, proposed “that it would be a waste of money to repair the present building, and that taking into consideration the amount of subscription that has been already promised it would be the wisest course to rebuild it entirely”. This was agreed by a majority of 33.



The New Church Building Committee met in October, but could not agree to where the Church should be built. Some wanted it on the Green, but that proved too small. Consideration of taking out a £500 loan to assist with the costs was postponed until November when there was a Vestry meeting of the “Inhabitants and Occupiers Assessed to the Relief of the Poor of the Parish of Hallow” at which it was agreed to take up the Trustees of the Endowed School’s offer of a site, a field (129) called Renes (aka Reynes), with a 261 ft frontage, which is where the Church now stands. It was also agreed to borrow £500 from the Commissioners of Public Works in London.

Just as it seemed a final decision had been made about where the Church would be built, and in February 1866 with all the paperwork for the loan duly signed by the Committee and the Bishop, Mr J P Lord and Mr William Holland (Peachley Farm) wanted the new Church erected on the same site as the old Church building, but they were outnumbered and the original decision was agreed – again. April 1866 saw a meeting with the Architect Mr W J Hopkins and the Church plans being examined and approved. It was decided to have the maximum number of free seats in the Church as allowed by law and that builders tenders should be thrown open to public competition and advertised in several public journals. The cost to rebuild was thought to be £4,000.

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