

ENQUIRE WITHIN

Question: *Having seen how the wedding reception in the New Church looked in December, do you think it is a good idea to develop it as a regular venue for wedding receptions and other similar events?*

Answer: It did look splendid, didn't it?

This photograph, taken from the balcony, doesn't really do it justice, as it is in black and white. The arrangements of the tables, the deployment of the red carpets, the lighting, the use of coloured lights, the table floral decorations and the whole effect created a sense of occasion and a really warm and inviting ambience.

One of the advantages of this particular wedding was that it was not on a day immediately prior to a Sunday, so the pressure to prepare for the main worship was absent. However, the fact that it took place after Christmas made it rather inconvenient as we needed to put away the Crib scene in case there were breakages of the figures.

Some of the things we learned:

1. If the numbers attending are in excess of, say, 100, then the toilet facilities are inadequate for a whole evening's event. We have just 3 toilets;
2. The ovens were not adequate for the preparation of 140 cooked meals. In fact, quite a large amount of the meal was brought to the rectory to be placed in our ovens;
3. The kitchen equipment will need to be improved, including the use of a heated trolley and a dish-washer;
4. The event was fortunate in that the outside temperature was around 5°. When the temperature drops to below freezing, the BTUs coming out of our 14 heaters are inadequate and the people will complain about being cold;



5. The doors are always being left wide open and we need to install efficient door-closers to prevent them left wide open;

6. We were lucky enough to borrow tables from Coston School to boost the tables we have, but if we were to make this a regular way to use the church, we would need to buy more tables, possibly some stacking chairs and other items, all of which would create a storage problem;

7. We were again lucky in that the families involved in this wedding were very responsible, really aware of where they were, and consciously trying to respect the building as a church. They were also very good at helping out, before, during and after the wedding day. How many other families could be expected to behave in such a responsible manner, after lots of drinking and partying?

8. The corollary of this is that we will need caretaking staff who are paid properly and willing to deal with the possibility of drunken guests and other hassles. There will always be guests who demand another hour of dancing, etc. Not a very nice thing to ask someone to do, even for a decent amount of money;

9. The number of caretaking staff would have to be at least 3 or 4 people because putting all the chairs back in place after a wedding reception on a very late Saturday or early hours of Sunday morning would not be a nice way to spend your time. We need people who know how to place the furniture and willing to clear up first;

10. The price structure from such lettings must pay for the costs and create an income stream which justifies the inconvenience which it will undoubtedly cause.

Have you got any views or opinions? Let us know!

Neil Richardson