



St John's Community Consultation Meeting Summary

30 September 2026, 4:00 PM
St John's Hall, Northgate

1. Key Information at a Glance

Thank you to everyone who attended the recent community consultation regarding the future of the St John's Northgate site. The meeting provided an opportunity for parishioners and community users to hear about current property arrangements, emerging opportunities, and the early stages of planning for the site's long-term future.

Apollo Lease Arrangements

A new lease has been entered into with Apollo, providing greater clarity around responsibilities, site access and maintenance. The leased area has been reduced and will be separated by new fencing and a dedicated driveway. This arrangement provides increased certainty for site users while also generating income to support the parish during future planning processes. The lease is for a shorter-term period of approximately four years and has a defined end date, allowing future options for that area of the property to remain open.

Looking Ahead: Shared Use and Future Development

Discussions are underway regarding a potential long-term lease arrangement with the Syro-Malabar Catholic community, which has worshipped and operated from the site for almost ten years and now serves approximately 350 families and around 1,000 Catholics. The community currently uses the church and parish facilities for worship, catechism programs and community activities.

The proposal being explored centres around the possibility of developing a modern multipurpose hall and associated facilities to replace ageing buildings on the site. Existing structures are reaching the end of their useful life and present increasing maintenance, compliance and safety challenges. Any

future development would aim to create facilities that can support both the Syro-Malabar community and the wider Mother of Mercy Parish.

Current Status

No final decisions have been made regarding future development. The concepts presented were preliminary and intended to support discussion and community feedback.

Before any redevelopment could proceed, further consultation, planning, approvals and financial assessments would be required. Any potential redevelopment remains several years away, with discussions indicating that projects of this nature would likely extend towards 2030 and beyond. In the meantime, existing facilities will continue to be used and maintained.

Community Involvement and Next Steps

The consultation marked the beginning of a broader conversation about the future of the St John's Northgate site. Participants highlighted the importance of ongoing communication, transparency and meaningful consultation throughout the planning process.

To support ongoing engagement, the parish is exploring the establishment of a **Community Working Group** to help guide discussions, consider community feedback and support future consultation activities. Further information regarding the Working Group will be shared in the near future.

As planning progresses, additional community updates, meetings and feedback opportunities will be provided. Parishioners and site users are encouraged to remain involved by sharing ideas and suggestions regarding future facilities, parish ministries, community activities and other initiatives that may help shape the future of the site.

We thank everyone who participated in the discussion and look forward to continuing the conversation together.

2. Questions Raised by Participants

Governance and Decision-Making

Question	Answer
With the parish priest being transferred, does that affect the project or any future agreements?	No. Any future agreement will be entered into by whoever is the parish priest at the time. Any lease over nine years would also require approval through Archdiocesan governance processes, including approval from the Archbishop.
Who makes the final decision on whether a future lease or development proceeds?	Any arrangement would require agreement from all relevant parties, including the parish priest, the Syro-Malabar community, consultation with the Finance Council, and ultimately Archdiocesan approval. The Archbishop provides the final sign-off.

Apollo Lease

Question	Answer
Will the Apollo lease result in more vehicles on the site?	No. The leased area has actually been reduced by approximately 2,000 square metres. Apollo's vehicles and staff will be confined to the leased area within the new fenced enclosure.
Will both driveways remain?	Yes. The new driveway will be used exclusively by Apollo. The existing driveway will remain available for the rest of the site.
Will trees be removed as part of the Apollo	No significant tree removal is planned. Only minor pruning is anticipated. Protected trees

works?	will remain and all work is being undertaken under arborist supervision.
Is the new fencing being paid for by the parish?	The fencing is being installed by the parish, but the additional rental income recovers the cost, with an estimated payback period of approximately one year.
Who will manage the Apollo site?	The parish remains the landlord. Apollo is responsible for everything within its fenced area, while the remainder of the site remains managed by the parish.

Proposed Long-Term Lease with Syro-Malabar Community

Question	Answer
Why is a 50-year lease being considered for the Syro-Malabar Community?	A long-term lease provides sufficient security for a community to justify investing in new facilities. Shorter lease terms would make it very difficult to fund or finance a significant building project. However, 50 years is a proposal only and has not been decided.
Does the 50-year term mean the existing hall will be demolished?	The current buildings are approaching the end of their economic life, but the expectation is that they would remain in use until a replacement facility is approved, funded and ready to proceed.

Existing Buildings

Question	Answer
What does "end of useful life" actually mean? Are the buildings unsafe?	The buildings contain asbestos, compliance issues and various safety concerns. While they can continue to be used for now, there comes a point where continued investment represents poor value and further maintenance becomes increasingly difficult to justify. The parish has obligations regarding safety and compliance.

Syro-Malabar Community

Question	Answer
Who are the Syro-Malabar community?	They are a Catholic Eastern Rite community recognised under Canon Law and separate from the Archdiocese of Brisbane. They are a Catholic community in their own right and currently serve around 1,000 Catholics and approximately 350 families.
Why is a long-term arrangement being considered with them?	They have worshipped on the site for nearly ten years, continue to grow, have significant facility needs, and are willing to invest in future facilities. The parish sees an opportunity to meet the needs of both communities.

Alternative Uses of the Site

Question	Answer
Was a Catholic school or education campus considered?	Yes. Brisbane Catholic Education was consulted but advised that the site is not part of its current priorities or long-term planning. Other Catholic uses have also been considered.

Existing User Groups

Question	Answer
How would existing groups that use the site be accommodated in the future?	The intention is that future agreements would preserve space and access for existing users. The parish indicated that it would not support a proposal that excluded current users and that appropriate provision would be included in any future arrangements.
When will groups such as the War Memorial Group have input into future lease arrangements and facility use?	Before any lease is finalised. The lease framework would reserve rights and access opportunities for parish groups, and consultation would continue before agreements are concluded.

Design, Construction and Development

Question	Answer
Who would choose the builder and contractor?	That ultimately depends on who funds the project. However, the parish would retain approval rights over the development and require safeguards regarding design, construction, insurance, guarantees and project completion before consent is given.
Are there examples elsewhere in the Archdiocese of a similar arrangement?	There are examples of long-term commercial lease arrangements, but no directly comparable model involving another Catholic faith community. Similar discussions are occurring elsewhere in the Archdiocese.

Planning, Heritage and Zoning

Question	Answer
Has the site been rezoned?	No. The land remains zoned "Community Facilities". No rezoning has occurred and the current arrangements do not require rezoning.
How will parking be addressed in any future development?	Parking will be a key requirement of any development approval process and will need to be addressed through both council requirements and parish review of design proposals.
Can changes be made to a heritage-listed church?	Advice received suggests there may be opportunities to make limited additions at the rear of the church, provided heritage requirements are respected and the external appearance is maintained. No decisions have been made.

Consultation Process

Question	Answer
How will existing users and parishioners be consulted about future plans?	Before decisions are made. Suggested mechanisms included community meetings, website updates, surveys, a working group and regular feedback sessions. The process is intended to continue as plans develop.
Why was the Syro-Malabar community able to prepare a concept proposal before parishioners had input?	The parish explained that discussions with the Syro-Malabar community have been occurring because they are an existing long-term user of the site with identified facility needs. The consultation meeting was presented as the beginning of the broader parish consultation process, not the conclusion. The concept drawings shown were preliminary ideas intended to facilitate discussion rather than final plans.
When will parishioners have the opportunity to influence what is built and what facilities are included?	The parish advised that no final decisions have been made. Input is being sought now and will continue through future consultation processes, working groups, surveys and further community meetings before development proposals are finalised.
Is there a closing date for community feedback?	No specific closing date had been set. It was suggested that feedback be collected, summarised and shared back with the community at a future point in the process.

3. Feedback from the Community

"I would like to see St John's Catholic Church retained and maintained along with the onsite adjoining buildings. Also the improvement and maintenance of grounds round the church." - Parishioner

Additional comments and reflections from parishioners and community members are welcome. As further feedback is received, new comments, suggestions and perspectives will be added to this section to help ensure the community remains informed about the views being shared throughout the consultation process.

Overall Community Sentiment

While a range of views and questions were expressed during the consultation, a number of common themes emerged. Many parishioners indicated strong support for preserving St John's Church and its heritage, maintaining the site's role as a place of worship and community gathering, and ensuring that existing parish groups continue to be accommodated.

There was also broad interest in exploring opportunities that could enhance the long-term sustainability of the site and improve facilities for future generations. At the same time, participants emphasised the importance of ongoing consultation, transparency and meaningful community involvement before any major decisions are made.

Overall, the prevailing sentiment was one of cautious interest and engagement: parishioners expressed a desire to better understand the opportunities and challenges facing the site while remaining actively involved in shaping its future.