

Open Meeting of PCC re the future

4th April 2017

Some 28 people came together to listen to, consider and respond to the challenges, opportunities and options open to us in creating a sustainable future for All Saints.

We opened with three short presentations intended to give us all a common background in our thinking and discussions. Martin Penny (on behalf of Colin Bird) covered the PCC's thinking – especially the AwayDay and our discussion with Bishop Michael. Full details of these were published in the magazine and can be accessed and read at

<http://www.allsaintshertford.org/2016/nov16away.pdf>
<http://www.allsaintshertford.org/2016/dec16vfp.pdf> and
<http://www.allsaintshertford.org/reports/PCC/LGL161117.pdf>

Geoff Oates covered the key points from the Leading your Church into Growth course, highlighting the need to take the church to the people and not vice versa. The ideas behind this can be read at <http://www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/>

Janet Oldham summarised the thinking behind HeartEdge. Information on this was published in the March magazine at <http://www.allsaintshertford.org/2017/mar17vfp.pdf>

We then began to discuss ideas and possibilities.

At the time of writing, the output has yet to be analysed and reflected on by the PCC. In the meantime, here are some of thoughts and ideas about what we do/are, what we have to help us and what may be hindering progress.

Firstly, we split into three groups to consider what is this 'Church' that we want to sustain and grow.

"the Church" is

A place of

- Welcome
- Worship
- Witness

- Refuge
- Safety
- Fellowship
- Teaching
- Learning
- Prayer
- Peace
- Solace
- Comfort
- Reassurance
- Acceptance
- Friendship

A body of people who

- Believe in Christ
- Form part of a bigger whole
- Link many communities
- Sustain a tradition
- Bring others together
- Share experience
- Hear God's message
- Witness to the world

A focus for

- Culture
- God
- Social Opportunities
- The Community
- Inspiration
- Care for others
- Music

and one with many stakeholders across the Parish, Town, County and Diocese.

We then moved on to looking at what assets (tangible and intangible) that we had – creating this powerful list:

- ✓ Money
- ✓ Flexible space (up to a point)
- ✓ Reusable space
- ✓ Hall
- ✓ Time and Talents of our people

- ✓ Clergy
- ✓ Choir
- ✓ Community Engagement
- ✓ Used by the Community
- ✓ Improving
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ People of faith
 - 'Out of the centre'
 - a long way from Foxholes
- ✓ The networks we have
- ✓ Pastoral Care and support
- ✓ Teaching
- ✓ Prayer Support
- ✓ Welcomers
- ✓ Home Visitors
- ✓ Caterers
- ✓ Secular users
- ✓ God's Presence
- ✓ Support people at key life events
 - Baptism
 - Weddings
 - Funerals
- ✓ Used as a Diocesan resource
- ✓ And by the Town
- ✓ And Churches together
- ✓ Place of Peace and tranquillity
- ✓ Concerts
- ✓ Many Stakeholders
- Lack of Volunteer time
- Fear of loss
- Lack of vision
- Failure to form a consensus
- Restrictions in reuse of building
- Location
 - 'Out of the centre'
 - a long way from Foxholes
- Lack of Confidence
- Entrenched
- Fear of Change
- Specialist language
- Sunday secularisation
- 7 day working
- Atheism
- Reduction in RE teaching in schools
- Media focus on the negative aspects of church life
- On the margin
- We don't pull together
- No core tradition of church going
 - Can't bring people 'back' to something they never experienced

We then reflected on what is stopping us harnessing this effectively:

- Too much to do

Do please think and pray about this and come with your thoughts to future meetings.

If this has inspired a passion in you, do please consider joining the PCC to help think this through and develop plans to take God's mission to the parish of Hertford, All Saints!