

In the light of this presentation 'Let us Talk' – feedback from Beaminster Area Team.

The feedback was recorded at a Saturday morning event where we showed the You Tube video, presentation and then worked together in small groups. It was then added to at a Team Council Meeting. Therefore it represents the viewpoints of people across our team, not just one church. That is why sometimes we get conflicting viewpoints as answers to questions.

1. What is the 'Personality and Character' of your local church?

- Middle class and middle aged and elderly. Friendly, welcoming and loving – towards each other, are we the same towards the community?
- Church seen as the focus in the village and asset to whole community and, in some villages, the provider of most social events (only public building).
- Viewed by the villagers as unfriendly and as a special, elitist club.
- Newcomers – said it was physically welcoming, warm, and friendly. Gives a feeling of congregational spirit and links to the community.
- Friendly and approachable clergy.
- Unified yet disunified.
- Personality varied services eg midweek/Sundays. Dependent on the individuals who make up each service.
- Smaller parishes – small, cold, dank, and dark. Needed money to improve the physical environment, make it more user friendly.
- In the eye of the beholder.
- Wonderful, friendly, nice.

2. What are the priorities of your local church? (I think people may have answered this as what the priorities *should* be rather than actually are)

- Worship rather money.
- Congregation must accept individual responsibility for welcoming.
- Trying to bring in the people on the fringes – eg attend major festivals but don't attend regularly. Are we being successful in targeting them?
- Young people, teenagers, leaving the local church. Need to go to where they are rather than wait for them to come to us.
- Idea of community church to be developed, work alongside local council. More involvement in local schools.
- More community Christian spirit.
- Individual members doing lots in the community, but the church as a whole not recognised as doing much in the community.
- More church events, lunches organised by local clergy, meetings in different villages to allow people to meet and talk and feel they are being heard.
- Finding people to take over from existing office holders who have been doing the job for a long time. Who is coming next?
- Where young people are? Should be more links with youth centre. Schools? Sports pavilion, church yard on a Friday night?

- Are we having the right sort of services at the right time? Would more people have baptisms in church later in the morning? Would later times attract more children? Have multiple services. Baptisms on a Sat/Mon? Baptisms in cafe church.
  - Overcome the image of being elite/exclusive.
  - Maintaining fabric and building.
  - To share our love of Jesus and faith with the community by loving our community.
3. Is there one thing you would like to take on or develop in the coming year (recognising that may mean you may need to stop doing something else)?
- Parish or team audit – find out other peoples’ views on the churches.
  - Two questionnaires – one for local church, how would they like to serve, what do want changed.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire -Community – how can we work together with you, how can we serve you, what do you see as the needs of the community?
  - One clear and consistent order of service across the team. Standardise order of service.
  - PCC become less fearful of rejections within the village community – being perceived as poor initiators.
  - Try to bring people together in large gathered services (Beaminster) whilst maintaining village worship less frequently.
  - Showing church life historically and currently through photographs. More effort to display what we do, more family events. Local people feeling excluded. People feeling included by their photos being used.
  - Develop a new service – new ways of being church
  - New styles of worship eg liquid worship in the villages to attract the younger generation.
4. Are there ways in which we can work together with neighbouring churches to achieve more?
- Team services in outlying villages. Only service at that time.
  - Working together with other Christian communities in the area, eg Catholics in Beaminster, Methodists in Drimpton. High Anglicans, Charismatics. Week of prayer for Christian unity.
  - Canvass the youth in different areas.
  - More work as a deanery team eg Youth work, alternative worship.
  - More active in our own team before we look outward further. Building a big church fellowship.
5. How can we best measure the quality and impact of church life?
- Building a bigger congregation

- Improving quality
- Spiritual impact on community as a whole.
- How do people outside view us. Ask them – questionnaire.
- Measure in terms of percentage.
- Follow up on baptism and other occasional offices.
- Age distribution throughout congregations.
- New church communities – fresh expressions etc.
- New members coffee mornings, welcome events.
- Leaflets into houses when people move in, welcoming them into the church and local community.
- Encourage all congregations to put a team news with complement slip into new houses.
- Welcoming people into the church and community. “Welcome wagon” – someone visited telling them about church and the local community.
- Making more use of local press. Appointing a PR officer for the team. Using website/ facebook/blog/twitter as appropriate.