

LET US TALK – BEMERTON, Simon Woodley

I think we felt that it was another initiative among many, would it last, would it make a difference etc - when we're all fully busy doing mission, improving buildings, doing social action.

As an incomer to the Diocese 9 years ago, it strikes me there is no overall character of the Diocese - or at least it is rich, complex and not easily defined (or united!)

Anyway, hope this is helpful!

Simon Woodley

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

St.Andrews is open all day, it is a village meeting point and focus. Those who come to services are middle Anglicans, not too high or low. The average age would be well over 70. Numbers are dwindling. No-one comes every week. There is a potential to reach the young families, but it's a question of our human resources

St.Michaels tries to be here for local people. Most Salisbury churches are niche markets - cathedral, St.Paul's etc. They also cater for the intellectual, aspirational, and what we might call the top slice. We aim lower! So it is about an atmosphere of welcome that is real not phoney or insincere. Worship is all different musical styles, there is some liturgy and ritual and some extempore. St.Michael's will try anything, and welcome anyone. We value close friendships, which can stop growth as there is no room for new people in existing friendships. We are very faithful. We want to do social action, but we're not very sure about it!

- What are the priorities of your local church?

See our MAP attached

- 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)?

We are taking on setting up an advice cafe

- Are there ways in which we can work together with neighbouring churches to achieve more?

We meet with Catholics and Methodists and do some socials together - but they do not reach The Heath - only the middle class, comfortable areas. The Methodists are old and dying, but have started a social action project. The Catholics are over stretched and lovely.

- How can we best measure the quality and impact of church life?

Stories of lives changed

Hours of prayer