

The response of Canford Heath parish to Let us talk

The questions being asked are:

1. What is the 'Personality and Character' of your local church?
2. What are the priorities of your local church?
3. Is there one thing you would like to take on in the coming year (recognising that may mean you may need to stop doing something else)?
4. Are there ways in which we can work together to achieve more?
5. How can we best measure the quality and impact of church life?

1. We are a welcoming church, with an active community focus enhanced by being on a neighbourhood centre site. We are a relatively new church being founded in 1981 and the current building being less than 25 years old. (We were planted by St George's Oakdale and remain part of the N. Poole Ecumenical team but having our own parish of over 14,000 people on a large housing estate.) We are a steadily growing church and are well linked to the other 2 denominations in our area, sharing our evening services with the Baptists.

2. Our aims and thus priorities are to Meet with God, Value All people, Share the Good News and Serve the Community

3. The next door surgery which was badly damaged by fire last summer is about to be up for sale and would make an ideal site for a church run community café/ advice centre. So we have set up a small group to explore ways of operating and funding such a scheme. That group is currently having to meet weekly as time is not on our side. We envisage cutting back on some of the other meetings including possibly reducing entire PCC's to 4 business meetings a year and relying more on the work of the sub-groups of which the café will be one. We may also need to reduce the number of evening services as per the suggestion of our Baptist friends.

4. The diocese might provide more local training events particularly in the evenings or weekends to the Poole conurbation, given its large population and number of churches. Working closer with Winchester diocese to deliver such a programme might help as the Bournemouth area is so adjacent. There is possibly room for a deanery picnic at Upton Park or alike or a combined use of the Holton Lee camping site. We also will need diocesan support for the café idea in 3.

5. Attendance on Sundays is only a part of this. The number of people involved in a voluntary manner in what the church tries to deliver is another measure, as is the number in home groups or alike attempting to progress in discipleship. We could also try to count the footfall into our church during the entire week and possibly the changes in that. Then there is the interaction with local schools, youth centres and other institutions, and the amount of time devoted to overseas initiatives and missions to calculate.

Rev Peter Gibbs and Churchwardens

8.4.13