

From: David Shaw [<mailto:danddshaw@btinternet.com>]
Sent: 22 April 2013 10:41
To: letustalk
Subject: FW: Let Us Talk - Five Questions and Five Answers [Scanned]

Dear Bishop

We have been thinking about your Let us Talk project since early in the New Year and have now encapsulated our answers into a paper which I attach. I'm afraid it is five pages long and if every parish submitted similar amounts we would decimate the rain forests and you would be unable to read them all! Our paper may reflect the views of some others so in order to judge whether the attachment is worth opening, here is a summary of our answers to your five questions and a brief conclusion:

- The 'Personality and Character' of St Mary's Codford is straightforward and conservative. While the inclination of a middle aged to elderly congregation is to the traditional, we have embraced most innovations readily and happily. We do not like 'noise' but can cope with it occasionally. Our core congregation is bolstered by others on the Electoral Roll and a wide group of supporters in an outer orbit still. Our church works and having recently concluded our AGM we consider the resources we have and need to find are well managed.
- Our priorities are to attract younger members into our church and onto the PCC and to keep our heads above water in the financial whirlpool of the Share and Repair requirements that face us.
- If there was one thing we would like to develop beyond all others in the coming year it would be to improve our links with the young, initially through their 'gatekeepers'. The future of our church (and perhaps all of them) depends on this
- We already work together with the other nine churches in the Upper Wylve Valley Team. We share the time of the Clergy team and the list of activities reported in the latest Annual Review, in addition to those of our own church, number 23 into which we dip or to which we contribute, or both. The Team is an active and busy one and there is something for everyone.
- As to the quality and impact of church life here, our church building is an important focus in the community; we have a regular and loyal, if relatively small, congregation and we can call on a host of others who have offered expertise or general help. Most of the rest of the parish 'would rather the church was there than not.'

To conclude, St Mary's Parish Church and the ministry that emanates from it is loved by some who live in the parish, used and visited by many more in this county and country and from overseas, and tolerated by most of the rest. These days, and without being complacent, we consider that to be pretty good.

I hope this is helpful but the paper attached provides important context and the meat on the bones of the reply that is above.

Yours sincerely
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