

Let us Talk – The Vale of Pewsey Team’s Response to the Bishop’s Questions. April 2013

The answers to these questions were collated at a meeting of representatives from the different ‘clusters’ of the parishes and the Clergy team. Therefore ‘local’ and ‘parish’ apply to more than one church and parish. The answers are as individual as possible but often there was common ground.

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

- Warm and welcoming – sociably and in most cases, physically warm
- A variety of services through the month, catering for peoples’ needs
- Good organisationally, with faithful congregations, which tend to be small, but larger at the major festivals
- Deeply committed to buildings and people
- Concerned for the future – (some anxious about funding)
- Looking to the local community through ministering to schools (Open the Book), the pastoral work of Lay Pastoral Assistants, help with Valued Lives (adults with learning difficulties) and a huge amount of unseen voluntary work by church members with such things as the Link Hospital Car scheme and support for the Trussell Trust.
- Looking outwards to the world – support for South Sudan through the Team’s connection with Bishop Peni in Nzara diocese
- Essentially rural
- Traditional – a strength and (at times) a weakness

2. a) What are the priorities of your local church?

- Stewardship schemes – financial and social
- To target young families, perhaps on a seasonal initiative. To an extent this is happening with Open the Book and the work of YACHT (Youth and Children’s work)
- To increase our congregations
- To move with the times in terms of meeting peoples’ needs for worship and prayer
- To keep afloat financially
- Through the work of the LPAs, to reach out pastorally where help is needed

2. b) What are the priorities of your Team? (We have added this to our reply as we feel this is an important part of our Christian presence in the Vale of Pewsey.)

- Worship and Prayer
- Mission – the Good News of the Gospel leading to the transformation of lives
- Loving our neighbours – building bridges through our pastoral, schools and community involvement, for instance, a new initiative helping young people into employment through mentoring, (EPIC), inclusion in events such as the Pewsey Carnival, and the Link scheme (already mentioned)
- Building up God’s people – one way is through the involvement in the Deanery Outreach Group, which has a programme of events to be launched next year, 2014, but with preparations beginning shortly. This will be a Mission to the whole of the Pewsey Deanery, involving both the teams of Savernake and the Vale of Pewsey
- Pastoral care for all ages

3. Is there one thing you would like to take on or develop in the coming year (recognising that you may need to stop something else!)

- Invite friends and neighbours to join the Church family (Back to church Sunday) although not just that particular Sunday if the service rota doesn't fit
- Stewardship
- Deanery Mission – Pentecost launch (spiritual) with cake!

4. Are there ways we can work together with neighbouring Churches to achieve more?

This is happening already in: a) Our clusters made up of trios of parishes

b) In the Team

c) Pewsey Deanery - there is great potential in many areas such as Mission, LPAs, Learning and Education, Youth groups and Children's work.

5. How can we best measure the quality and impact of Church life?

Perhaps through looking for the Signs of the Kingdom

- Warmly welcoming – and do people come back? Although there is more to church life than numbers, success and finance. Christmas services are packed.
- The EPIC project,
- Open the Book in 5 schools (wow!)
- Experiences, i.e. Easter, Pentecost , (the churches reaching out to the schools)
- Valued Lives – a particular ministry to vulnerable adults
- RayD8 – a monthly meeting of worship, prayer and in-depth talks drawing people from across denominations to be spiritually fed
- Building a school and paying for teachers in South Sudan
- Personal faith growing – vocation in the broad sense
- New people taking on new roles
- BCP congregation seeing need to reach out to families through children's services.

Finally we believe that our congregations need –

- Encouragement
- Inspiration
- To know they are valued
- Support – in numbers, and Finance.