

Reviewing our Mission Action Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Every parish in the Diocese is required to have a Mission Action Plan which indicates the priorities identified as we move forward in mission and outreach.

The Mission Action Plan needs to be an on-going document which is not set in stone nor becomes a straitjacket that prevents a church from getting on with things or changing priorities as new things emerge.

Our Diocese has presented us with four headings under which our plan should be set:

More Open. More Converted to Jesus Christ. More Generous. More engaged.

And then each heading has to say something about: the missional focus and how to do it, the timescale, the training, the resources needs and a review date.

A word of warning is that a Mission Action Plan is bound for failure if it is devised by the Vicar and then he is required to lead every part of it in practice. Also, a plan that included lots of initiatives ends up not being delivered because the parish baulks at the size of the task it has given itself. In October 2022, the PCC agreed a plan using these headings and I have set out below what was agreed and then added some notes of progress made and thoughts about the next steps.

MORE OPEN –

Missional Focus – to develop links with our local primary school and our church based pre-school, and, where appropriate, to work in close liaison with Findon Valley Free Church,
Plan – to set in place regular worship and assembly programmes at the school and generate better communication between the school and ourselves.

To re-establish the links with the Pre School encouraging the use of the church for celebration times and visiting the children in the hall.

To get involved in the Monday Toddler Group.

To tell them about the things we have running already in church: Jump/Christmas Services/advent bags/ other events from the FACT team.

Already done – FVFC minister and I have set up regular assemblies in the school. Our Pre School have visited the church for Harvest with good parental attendance and feedback and they will come again at Christmas – hope to build into a regular pattern of visits for next year.

Time Scale – underway – assuming all goes well this term – to have a programme in place for visits for 2023.

Training needed – Open the Book drama training for any who might like to become part of a team going into the school to lead drama based assemblies. Diocesan grant applied for.

Further outcomes – we try to shape what we offer for children and families through the links we make in these ways – Jump style services, midweek groups, baptisms, confirmations etc.

Review – Summer 2023

PROGRESS MADE –

1. Assemblies at Vale School every half term, working with the minister at FVFC.
2. Visits to pre-school on a monthly basis for story and song. Many more parents attending pre-school services in church. Involvement in joint Summer Fayre. Parents bringing children to FACT events. Joint Communications Group set up. Members of Pre-school Parent group joining Social committee.

NEXT STEPS-

1. Our involvement in Monday Toddler Group is now nil since the sad death of Dorothy Spencer. Can we revitalise this.
2. Open The Book drama training available across the Deanery.
3. Where to take our growing links with Pre-school.
4. How might others be involved in assemblies – this does not have to be minister led exclusively.

MORE CONVERTED TO JESUS-

Missional Focus – to involve more people in the worshipping life of our churches,

Plan – widen the numbers of those prepared to assist in worship – encourage fresh faces from the edges to the centre – engender a feeling of commitment to the worshipping life of the church. Build up the teaching/devotional life of the church on days apart from Sundays. To use St Peter's for quiet days and teaching programmes.

Already done – plans for an Advent Quiet Day – share possibilities for worship beyond just what happens in our two churches, build upon WOW and Maranatha as existing opportunities. See how the Diocesan initiative of "A Year With The Old Testament" might work for us

Time Scale – To use Advent and Lent as opportunities to encourage teaching opportunities and make more widely available other things on offer.

Training Needed – more people confident to lead and look out for Diocesan opportunities.

Further out comes – a confidence in faith, an increase in regular church attendance, welcoming new people who then want to stay with us.

Review Easter 2023

PROGRESS MADE-

1. Whilst it has not been easy to encourage people to take an active part in leading worship, some have stepped forward to help.
2. Newcomers have found a welcome here but mainly we draw them from other churches. Few new converts.
3. Although we could number 60/70 people who come to church over the course of a month, regular weekly worship numbers average still at 40 at All Saints and 15 at St Peter's
4. Three courses, 'Signs Along the Seashore', 'Within Walking Distance' and 'Roads of Hurt and Hope' have been well supported and there is a thirst for more.
5. Increased number at JUMP including welcoming families.
6. Wednesday and Thursday Morning Prayer at All Saints includes a member of each local church.

NEXT STEPS-

1. A concerted effort to give people the confidence they need to play a part in worshipping life. Training?
2. To continue to build up our programme of study groups.
3. Quiet Day using leadership from 3 local churches planned for St Peter's as a prelude to more devotional prayers based opportunities.
4. Retain up to date data base of families with whom we have contact.
5. Building upon the successful summer fayre and the link with the PreSchool.

MORE GENEROUS-

Missional Focus – to bring stability to the financial side of our church life – bearing in mind the significant shortfalls currently experienced.

Plan – put the financial situation firmly in the minds and hearts of everyone and allow all aspects of stewardship to be spoken of easily. To put in place an annual stewardship Sunday – where the accent isn't just on financial giving – but on the wider gifting in the church and thanksgiving. Set up a simple digital giving opportunity.

Already Done – Stewardship Sunday October 2022. Establishment of Finance and Fabric Committee. Looking into digital possibilities.

Time Scale – on going until gap between expenditure and income begins to close.

Training Needed – if fresh impetus is needed – some Diocesan input.

Further outcomes – that from a stronger financial position, we can build a programme of giving beyond our own internal needs and work on wider projects into more support of world mission and community projects.

Review: At every Annual Meeting.

PROGRESS MADE-

1. More realistic parish share contribution for 2024 agreed with Diocese.
2. Regular annual stewardship Sunday in place.
3. Easy Fundraising and Digital giving in place.
4. New and more economical energy supplier in place.
5. Solar panel installation a continuing project.
6. Evidence of increase in giving is helping reduce our budget deficits.

NEXT STEPS-

1. Visit from Diocesan Adviser on giving methods.
2. Encourage newcomers to planned giving after 6 months regular worship with us.
3. Ways of continuing to make clear that our long-term financial future remains uncertain especially if we aspire to once again appointing a full time Parish Priest eventually.

MORE ENGAGED-

Missional Focus – To focus our existing activities into support of the needs people will have during this time of economic constraint. Linking up with the Warm Welcome national campaign and seeking assistance and publicity via local authorities and Residents Associations. To consider how a relaunching of ARK can fit into this and apply for funding.

Plan – to advertise our church as a warm space during the winter months with existing Knit and Natter Group and Coffee and Cake Groups and the church being open on Thursday morning and to co-ordinate our activities with those offered by the Free Church and the Library service. Meeting with Bob Smytherman to discuss ARK funding and prepare an application, build up working together with HS Residents Association and FVRS and seek to be of service.

PROGRESS MADE-

1. The warm welcome grant was only a small drop in the ocean and was not available this year.
2. Evidence of growth in our Knit & Natter and Coffee & Cake groups.
3. Good links with the Valley and High Salvington Residents Associations.
4. Involvement in Christmas Lat Night Shopping but not an easy experience.
5. Good links with local Councillors, Turning Tides and local Ukrainian support group.

NEXT STEPS-

1. The cost of running ARK (Acts of Random Kindness) was seen to be prohibitive but do we need to look at this again. What are the needs? What resources do we need? Consider Safeguarding concerns?
2. Are there new ventures to join in with? FVFC proposed community hub.
3. Increase the FACT initiative with young families which has been successful.
4. How to further build up our communications network.
5. Establishing a regular yearly outing for the church community.

FOR US TO THINK ABOUT....

Does this adequately reflect the priorities of the life we share? Are there elements of progress that have been missed out?

Are there next stops not included?

Are there fresh areas of our church life that you would like to see included?

A FINAL NOTE-

Mission Action Plans do not reflect every aspect of the life of a church, but rather the most important ones at this time.

In the things we take forward, who resources them, both in terms of leadership and volunteering.

AC/June 2024