

Church Council Update

The following update reports on the discussion at the December Church Council meeting and the half-day review we held at the end of November. If you have any questions or comments on the following, please let me know or speak to any member of the Church Council. Thanks, Glenn.

CC Review – We spent an afternoon discussing the questions raised at the AGM around Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities. We have been prompted to look at priorities across the church in response to concerns raised about the loading on various people. As a caring community we need to ensure that we are looking after church members, as well as thinking about the mission opportunities.

We discussed priorities but recognise that prioritisation is not necessarily straightforward in a Church environment. It is not just a case of choosing to stop particular activities (it was interesting that all of the groups at the AGM avoided the question of what to stop) as they are often driven by the calling and passion of individuals involved and this cannot simply be transferred to another activity. We are also conscious that things change over time and it is important to be able to review and re-evaluate how and where things are going.

It may be difficult but we need to get to a point where people don't get trapped in roles or feel guilty about stopping when they need a break. The idea of taking sabbaticals is important in maintaining the spiritual health of the church body.

We do not want people to feel guilty or pressured into doing things that they don't want to do but this does need to be weighed against the fact that it is reasonable to be challenged by the opportunities for mission and that we need to make sure that everyone is aware of the needs. We need to recognise different people have different gifts and time available but also ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and we should be encouraging everyone to discover and use their gifts (if you feel that there are things that you could contribute to please let us know).

As part of the review we identified the key activities that we must maintain, such as Sunday Services, Home-Groups and Prayer Evenings and then those that we see at high priority at this point, such as Compass, Café Eden and STOP etc and those that are important but not critical. We will use this to steer our choices going forward and to ensure that we spend sufficient time supporting and guiding leaders of the various activities.

One particular activity, the Community Action litter picking, was discussed and we agreed that it has been superseded by other activities which we could consider

part of CA, such as Café Eden, Marriage Course etc. We therefore decided to stop this for the time being but to remain open to specific requests for help.

We will continue to discuss specific topics at the regular CC meeting but plan to have longer sessions outside of the normal day-to-day business every six months. If you would like to see more detailed notes from the discussion or to provide input to process please let us know.

Youth work – The appointment process is continuing, an offer has been made and we are awaiting a response from the candidate and will review the next steps then. The follow-up to the Youth Alpha course was discussed with Claire and a challenging programme is being put into place. It has been very exciting to see young people from Compass & 14-2-17 coming along to the Youth Alpha and the follow up sessions will remain open to anyone to attend. The need for a Baptism service in the New Year was discussed and there is at least one candidate but the opportunity will be given to others to consider if this is an appropriate step for them.

Prayer Evenings – When reviewing the priorities it was agreed that these were vital to the life of the church. Concerns had been expressed over the number of people attending, given that prayer supports all that we do. We do need to revitalise these and it was suggested that this should include a time of worship as well as a variety of forms of prayer in future. It is important that we remember our commitment to corporate prayer (part of our membership commitment) and we should look on these evenings as part of our family worship together, not just another meeting. We should be able to hold one another accountable for this, not to try to make people feel guilty if they genuinely cannot or don't feel that it is right to attend at these times but to make sure that it has the right priority for us all. We have now settled on Tuesday for prayer evenings and I would strongly encourage everyone to attend as often as possible.

Worship – We have some exciting Christmas Services arranged but we have an urgent need for someone to lead the service on the 25th January. If you can help with this please contact Beryl a.s.a.p.

We are planning to sing Christmas carols outside Budgens on the morning of Saturday 20th December. Roger is organising it. Please put it in your diaries and come along if you can. If you can help with the organisation please let Roger know.