

Parish meeting - 21 November 2021

Dreams, hopes and fears for the future of our Parish and Church – table discussion post-its

In small groups, we discussed the questions suggested by Bishop Patrick and wrote the answers on post-its:

- 1) *What is my dream for the Church, for my parish/chaplaincy so that it can become more outward-looking, more missionary?*
- 2) *To achieve this dream, what do we need to stop doing? What are we doing that needs to be developed or done differently? What do we need to leave behind? What are we already doing?*

Below are the answers as written by each of the groups. Please read through all of these comments.

Ponder on them and pray. Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you.

Which 6 strike you as being the most important? What do we have to do to make them happen?

Bring the fruits of your pondering back to the meeting on 16th January 2022.

“Use of social media to promote community projects to encourage and engage young people

Promote use of suggestion box

More young people into the church - make them welcome and engage in activities

Listen to their opinions

More interaction between the Catholic schools and church

Encouraging lapsed Catholics to return to church

How do we attract more young people

Contact with schools

Follow PPC 2004 mission statement and the way we would achieve it

To have a good reputation among a wider community

Need to encourage younger people to be involved in parish life. ‘Street by Street’ model. Not necessarily going to mass.

Need to look outwards to those in our community who need help and support – both mentally and socially

That we can get to net zero by 2030

Get back to the Garden of Eden

That St. Anne's will carry on as a parish

Stop hiding, go out

Listen to children.

Support the schools.

Give up wanting.

Small groups to be a way to access the wider parish.

Open to all.

Make people feel welcome.

Enquiries route? – obvious when some-one steps into church. Noticeboard

More open.

Less comfortable.

Nicer biscuits and cakes.

More community.

Involve the youth and young adults.

Sense of belonging.

Universal/open.

Music.

More social.

Make sure people know we don't have to meet an ideal before they can come.

Inclusivity – welcoming, warm.

Do more than just going to mass on Sunday.

Consider establishing an environmentally and reduce costs? Inexpensive housing.

Develop social/refugee housing.

More connectivity with other churches.

Positive co-operation with other churches.

To be seen as a welcoming and caring centre for the whole of Buxton.

We must keep and enhance the parish centre in order to achieve our dream.”

Parish Meeting – 21st November 2021

Fr. Gerry and Margaret Swift (PPC Chair)

About 30 people took part in the parish meeting last Sunday; thank you all for your interest and contributions. Thank you also to those who sent in their apologies and their comments, which will be shared at a future meeting.

On the other side of this sheet you will see the fruits of our discussions about the hopes and dreams for our parish. Have a read through the comments. *Ponder on them and pray. Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you.*

Which 6 strike you as being the most important? What do we have to do to make them happen?

Please bring the fruits of your pondering back to the meeting on 16th January 2022 to share with the parish.

Below is a summary of what we said about our dream and the reasons we think that change is needed so that we can become a more missionary church, followed by **one suggestion of how we might be able to make this happen.**

We know that some of you have other suggestions for the future of the Centre; we invite you to share these in more detail with the parish at our next meeting on 12th Dec.

After a short explanation of the Synod, Fr Gerry spoke about his dream for our parish and the Community Centre, and the problems we are currently having. It was the end of an era for the Community Centre when Jill retired and the playschool closed, and we lost our main hirer. This obviously has had a big effect on the Centre income, but bills still need paying. We have managed to attract some new groups but the onset of COVID and the pandemic has exacerbated the situation. Society has changed and church attendance has changed. We now find ourselves at a crossroads where we must make some difficult decisions and we know the journey ahead will be long and won't be easy!

These are the points made by Fr Gerry:

1. Our parish is declining in numbers and we are primarily, an ageing parish. We only have one weekend mass, and two weekday masses. We're not attracting younger families or young people. Our finances are declining and our church and centre volunteers are also ageing and their numbers are decreasing.
2. We recognise that the Community Centre provides us with a meeting and socialising space, but nowadays, the parish hardly uses the centre.
3. We are providing the community with a facility in the centre and we are acting as letting agents and event managers. **This should not be our priority as it is not part of our essential mission of evangelisation; this is where we should be focusing our efforts.**
4. The Community Centre is becoming a drain on our financial and volunteer resources, and is a managerial and administrative burden to both Fr Gerry and Margaret. (Labour wasn't costed into the financial results reported to the parish in October).
5. All our buildings are old, need constant maintenance and repair, are inefficient and costs are increasing.

One possible solution to help solve some of these problems could be:

- Sell the Community Centre for residential development
- Adapt our beautiful church to provide an area for social and meeting space, toilets and kitchen in the far aisle.
- Bring the parish groups and some of the community groups who currently use the centre into this smaller, easier to maintain space where our church will meet the wider community much more obviously and become more evangelising.

Margaret distributed the sketch of this possible redevelopment in our church and talked through the main points:

It is only using the side aisle, Our Lady's altar and the choir area will remain. The suggested layout, as on the plan, would be reversed so that the toilets will be at the back (not near the front of the church). It is the aim that the space will be able to:

- be flexible to be used for different purposes e.g. children's liturgy, meetings and socials such as coffee mornings
- be heated independently
- be opened to the rest of the church if required, closed off when required
- have a dedicated entrance and will be able to be secured separately from the church, allowing groups from outside the parish to use it.

It was explained that this is **one possible option and that a final decision is far from being made.** This option has been discussed by the PPC and the diocese are aware. The plans are on display at the back of the church and there are smaller copies that we would like you to take to have a look at the space in the church and imagine what could be.

Please join us at our next parish meeting which will be on 12th December in the Hardwick Room after mass.