

The Synodal Listening Project

St John Fisher & St Thomas More Initial response to the Questionnaires.

Each of us, felt heartened by all the comments on the returned questionnaires. 17 were returned and 99% were positive, helpful and creative and identify a definite direction of travel in the short and longer term for both our parish and our church. There was a striking sense of friendship, warmth, support and a desire to continue walking with each other in faith.

There was equally a determination to make our new situation work and a keen sense that ALL PARISHIONERS ARE NEEDED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PARISH COMMUNITY in whatever way possible through prayer, action and witness.

Your comments have suggested specific areas for action...

- 1) **Refresh the ministry of welcome.** We already have 10 people who take turns to welcome us into church. Our hope is that we become a community of welcomers so that no one ever goes home without the chance of speaking to their neighbour. We need too, to continue the work to make the presbytery accessible to all parishioners.

- 2) **Enhance the Opportunity to meet together outside of worship.** The social group are preparing monthly events between now and Christmas.
September: Barbecue
October: Night at the Race
November: Firework night
December: Parish Meal; and a wine and cheese party.

- 3) **Better support for our children's liturgy.** Initially we need to consolidate the great work that is already going on in preparation for first Holy Communion and then along with Buxton to reach out to St Anne's school, St Thomas More's and St Thomas Aquinas College to create a dynamic and exciting programme for Confirmation.

- 4) **Sort out our PPC.** We need to clarify who is currently on it and if they are willing to continue to serve; how often it is to meet; and its relationship with the parish, the P.P. and the deacon.

- 5) **Respond to concerns about safeguarding and clerical abuse.** We will enhance the profile of our parish representative and invite the Diocesan Advisor, to come to mass and speak with us.

- 6) **Celebrate the ministry of our Deacon.** We will seek to free up Deacon Don to spend more time on pastoral duties by finding other ways of completing practical jobs in the parish (perhaps by employing a handyman on a part-time basis?)
- 7) **Update our Parish Records.** Our parish records are very much out of date we will update our census details and promote the shared parish website as a way of better communication. (Should Chapel return to having a separate newsletter?)
- 8) **Increase engagement with other Christian Churches and civic life.** We will seek ways to strengthen the relationships we have with churches together and seek ways to more fully engage with civic life. (Should we adopt a local “Charity of the Year”?)
- 9) **Improve access to the church for private prayer.** Sadly, our church is only open for a few hours a week. We will open the church for private visits by during the week by installing an access keypad and security camera.

Regarding the wider church issues, you have identified, we will forward our concerns about the following to the Bishops Conference of England and Wales:-

- A. The need for our Bishops to take a prophetic, timely and public lead on national and international issues; at present they appear oblivious, absent and slow.
- B. The need to become a less male orientated and clerical church by joyfully embracing the essential and varied ministries of women. We need to urgently discern how we may ordain women as deacons and priests.
- C. The need to become a church of people who are merciful rather than judgemental. In short, we need live and love as Jesus did.

This is our initial response to your questionnaires and of course your continuing comments and suggestions over the next few months will precipitate other actions which we will take together. Once again, our thanks are due to all who responded.

Fr Gerry, Deacon Don, Barbara Hindley, Marie Lawton, Peter Barnes and Angela Gillespie,
our outside advisor.