

Upper Thames Group Council – Church Snapshots update

Compiled by: Stuart Dagnall

Church: Latton

Date: 16/02/15

What has happened since the last group council meeting in your church? (events, changes in people, services, church repairs etc)

The Christmas services: a combined carol and crib service and Christmas Day service were both well attended and well received.

An Alpha course started on 12 January and is progressing successfully though possibly hasn't attracted as many new people as hoped.

Repairs to the church, as identified in the Quinquennial inspection, have started with the completion of gutter cleaning. The poor state of the guttering was unfortunately identified and will require more extensive remedial work.

What has been a concern for your church?

The management of the Village Hall was discussed at a meeting on 12 February called by the Latton Parish Council, and attended by PCC (Phil Bradley, Phil Winfield, Stuart Dagnall) and Sally Moody from the Diocese. The PC indicated that they had failed to form a management committee (a precondition of them taking an Albermarle Lease) and as the hall was seldom used by the village they couldn't justify funding the running and maintenance costs. The other options were discussed: PCC managing and funding the hall – a non-starter due to lack of resources; selling the hall and using the money generated to re-configure the church as a community centre as was proposed and rejected by the village several years ago.

The PC agreed to continue funding the running costs while options were jointly developed by the PC and PCC.

Church finances are currently stable but not buoyant with some expenditure pending (maintenance works etc).

What are the recent positives/successes?

The improved church attendance since Phil's has been maintained.

The continuing Alpha Course.

Compiled by: Linda Tuck

Church: Holy Cross, Ashton Keynes

Date: 17th February, 2015

What has happened since the last group council meeting in your church? (events, changes in people, services, church repairs etc)

The Ashton Keynes Village at War talk and exhibition organised by Friends of Holy Cross were a great success.

Our thanks to those PCC members who took over the organisation of the Christmas Bazaar in the village hall this year. It was a very successful event and we raised about £1600 for Holy Cross funds.

The Christmas services were well attended especially the Christingle and Crib services.

What has been a concern for your church?

The renewal work on the car park has been delayed and we are still waiting for this to take place.

We still working to complete the faculty to change the temporary faculty we have to a permanent one for the removal of six pews that provide our circulation space at the back of the church. This will probably take us some time to complete.

At a recent PCC meeting we looked at the 7 Marks of a Healthy Church and felt that the hardest and the ones we need to address were "Being energised by faith" and "listening to God". 'Growing the faith of all' needs consideration.

What are the recent positives/successes?

Messy church numbers are holding their own and seem to be going up slowly, which is encouraging. (53 adults and children half term sunday.)

What things are planned for the next few months that you want the other churches to know about?

Possibly we will run Pentecost Experience for the school in early June

A weekend celebrating baptisms and weddings at Holy Cross W/E of July 12th organised by Friends of Holy Cross.

Compiled by: Matt Smith

Church: St Sampson's, Cricklade

Date: 18th Feb 2015

What has happened since the last group council meeting in your church? (events, changes in people, services, church repairs etc)

- We have started a new 4pm informal worship service at 4pm every Sunday except the 1st of the month in St Sampson's Primary School. With modern worship songs, informal liturgy and have moved the children's and youth groups to this service. Check out the new webpage on the upper Thames website for more details:

<http://www.upperthames.org.uk/st-sampsons-cricklade/new-informal-worship/>.

- A new informal service "something different" has started on the 1st Sunday of each month at 6:30pm in the Jenner Hall. This is a modern relaxed service aimed at youth and adults.

- An Alpha course is running meeting at The White Hart Hotel, going well with about 14 people attending the first session.

- We have a new PCC secretary: Joe Valpy. Consequently Joe will be stepping down from her role on the group council.

- The leadership team has been brainstorming ideas for how we can spread the Good News in Cricklade.

- Tim Eyles has been appointed as new musical director.

What has been a concern for your church?

- With the new 4pm and 6.30pm informal worships services starting there is a concern that the church community is split and we don't all see each other every week. However services are being planned so that we all worship together at special occasions (e.g. Easter)

What are the recent positives/successes?

- The new informal worship services have started well with good attendance and a number of new faces coming along.

- Overall attendance is up across all the services

What things are planned for the next few months that you want the other churches to know about?

- Lent bible study groups start next week together with the United Church.
- Pastoral Groups are being set up to support the church community.
- 'The Gospel according to St Sampson's' initiative is underway to gather together up to 250-word personal statements from as many as possible about how God is good news to them based on personal experience. These will be collated into booklet.
- APCM is on the 26th April.