

Looking to the Future - A Report to the Congregation - July 2021



In the Parish of the Resurrection we have a Vision

Proclaiming the Risen Jesus

Steadfast in Faith

Active in Service

When we agreed the Five Year Plan we had four sections

Growing Disciples

Growing Community

Growing Younger

Growing Structures

The Church of England is developing a new strategy for the 2020s based around 3 fundamental words

Simpler

Humbler

Bolder

To grow into the future as The Parish of the Resurrection we need to have these four principles

Dynamic Partnerships - A Generous & Gracious Christian Character - Clergy & Lay People Working Together - Sustainability

The PCC commissioned a group of people to give recommendations for how we discerned things for the future as we emerge from the COVID pandemic. This was undertaken with a lot of prayer and a genuine desire to seek God's vision for the Parish of the Resurrection. The Futures Group were to look at: consulting widely amongst the Parish of the Resurrection Community, support groups within the Alton & District Community, in the Alton Deanery and amongst ecumenical partners; to provide a strategy for the use of our church buildings; to provide a rationale for an ongoing service pattern for the Parish of the Resurrection; to provide recommendations for ongoing worship, prayer and discipleship opportunities; to evaluate the staffing resource and make recommendations of future needs, deployment and employment; to formulate priorities and an action plan.

Following the group's presentation to the PCC and further discussion within the PCC we would like to share the following grouped under the same headings as the Five Year Plan. At the end there are some planned conversations which will need to take place and these will be agreed for the autumn. There is also more work to be done within the PCC on priorities and quantifiable targets which will be shared again during the autumn. The PCC Vision and Strategy Group take responsibility for the actions going forward and the conversations which now arise.

Growing Disciples

1. We will develop a network of groups, programmes and fellowship activities in which all the parish community will be encouraged to take part (ID groups - Christian **I**Dentity: **I**ntentional **D**iscipleship: **I**n-**D**epth Study)

1.1 each group and programme will have designated leaders, hosts and pastoral care

1.2 these groups will provide spiritual support and pastoral care

1.3 groups and programmes can take a variety of forms, meet at different times of the day and be in-person or via remote means

1.4 the Ministry Team to steer the provision of spiritual resources for the groups and programmes

1.5 the Ministry Team will have a role in supporting the spiritual and pastoral leaders by facilitating regular meeting and training

1.6 the groups and programmes will be part of the Parish welcome process and integration into the parish community

1.7 everyone needs to be confident in inviting people to consider the involvement in ID groups

1.8 the Parish will maintain a rolling programme of Alpha type groups to introduce people to the Christian faith and the parish - these will feed into the other ID groups and programmes

1.9 the ID programme should be communicated via the website and other means

This has been a growing part of the parish. There are now at least 16 groups meeting. Each one has a distinct feel, uses different resources which suits the needs of its members and has designated leaders. They most certainly provide good discipleship and contribute fully to the pastoral provision of the parish. At different points the leaders of the groups have been able to meet together with members of the Ministry Team to discuss resources, to help each other in good practice and to share good news.

With thanks to Revd Bruce Nicole the parish now has a regular and systematic programme of Alpha. Some of the courses have been held with other churches in Alton. Some of those who have attended are now part of home groups.

Information of all small groups are available on the parish website: <https://potr-alton.co.uk/discipleship-groups/>

Further work is needed on how the parish use the groups in the welcome process of new members. Alongside this there will be some teaching and encouragement on a culture of invitation.

Growing Community

2. We will encourage and enable the Parish church family to be 'active in service' and involved in events, activities and groups in the community

2.1 develop and publicise a calendar/programme of activities and events in partnership with other churches and organisations

2.2 invite a wider range of people to become part of the Community & Outreach Group which reports to the PCC

2.3 seek out parish members who will take charge of individual activities and encourage as many people as possible to participate

2.4 develop and initiate Fresh Expression/Pioneering Communities into the Wooteys/Manor area of Alton

2.5 recognising the new housing developments across the community - use professional leafleting and networks to raise the church profile

This is a big success for the parish. So many of our members are actively involved in our community through things like Alton Foodbank, The Community Cupboard, Christians Against Poverty, the Alton Community Resilience Fund, organisations such as The Lions, Rotary, Probus, Resurrection Furniture, Anna Chaplaincy, local charity shops, Homestart.

The Greater Alton Project Council have recently agreed to focus on our 'active in service' element. We will be looking to have regular speakers at our events from community groups, surveying our congregations to map our community engagements and to see where the 'gaps' might be.

The parish is involved in events and activities with other churches - Lent Course, Pop-up Carols, weekly meeting of Alton Ministers, Anna Chaplaincy, Travelling Meal etc.

The Community & Outreach Group is chaired by Robin Kemp and has representation from all four of our churches and Alton Methodist Church. This group looks at events in the community and seeks people to lead and organise - it has been successful so far.

All our new housing developments have been visited by groups made up people from the parish and other local churches. Leaflets have been delivered, doorstep conversations held and some people have engaged with worship and activities in churches.

Our new Associate Vicar has responsibility to look at our engagement on the Manor and Wootey estates. This was initiated pre-Covid and now needs a new look and ideas. We will be looking for a new updated strategy to be tabled in the autumn of 2024.

3. We will expand the Parish's ecumenical partnerships

3.1 explore the possibility of the establishment of an ecumenical group (clergy and lay) which builds on our experience of The Greater Alton Project and upon the existing ministers group which co-creates and oversees those things which make for good Christian unity and good Christian mission in the community, and which hears reports of the work of other organisations and ways to engage. To be able to plan joint evangelism, serving/blessing our community, joint spiritual events, and getting to know each other better

This has been discussed at Alton Ministers and agreed that there will be one off meetings for specific events and reaction to world events. The Lent Course, Pop-up Carols are examples of our ecumenical co-operation and we have our well established link with Alton Methodist Church (GAP) which flourishes with the Anna Chaplaincy, regular joint worship, Fairtrade coffee mornings and the like.

4. We will encourage participation as Foundation Governors in Church of England Schools (St Lawrence and Andrews Endowed) and Community Governors in other schools

We currently have no vacancies for Foundation Governors at our two C of E Primary Schools - St Lawrence and Andrews Endowed. Thank you to those who serve in this way. We have congregation members who are governors at other local schools, especially at Eggars and Amery Hill Secondary Schools and at least one who is a governor at HSDC Alton.

5. We will make our parish buildings more available for regular and wider community activities - such as nurseries, schools, other churches and choirs

The Parish Office takes the responsibility for taking bookings and our buildings are very regularly used. We host BusyBees Nursery in The Parish Centre, local schools use our church buildings for services and collective worships, choirs use our churches for concerts, The All Saints Hall has numerous weekly and monthly bookings for outside groups, The Butts Church use All Saints Church and Hall under a contracted agreement. Holy Rood is used more and more for village events and activities.

Growing Younger

6. We will commit to a weekly focus in services and other events for children/young people and families

6.1 re-establishment of Lighthouse, Church@4, Teddies and other events reflecting on what was on offer before the pandemic and what has been offered online and in light of the easing of restrictions

6.2 all liturgy, language and hymns and songs will be considered carefully for accessibility and using Audio Visual equipment as often as possible

6.3 there will be an intentional focus toward contemporary styles of worship without losing the best of traditional worship, music and prayers

6.4 a Children/Young People/Children Ministry Strategy Document to be refined and represented to the PCC

6.5 grow a Youth Congregation using Alton College Journey Project and young people evangelism and discipleship

6.6 look to younger members of the church community to take on positions of responsibility with relevant training and support

Lighthouse Children's Groups meet every Sunday morning at St Lawrence Church with a healthy number attending - it varies from week to week! Church@4 is now held once a month meeting in The Parish Centre which is easier for our catering purposes. Teddies Toddler Groups are meeting in Holy Rood and St Lawrence Church weekly led by Sarah Ebbutt and team and Lynn Power and Immy Woods respectively.

We are consciously looking at the language of our liturgy and hymns and songs for ease of use, giving flexibility and in relation to the church seasons. In Holy Rood and St Lawrence we make use of the AV equipment which means we can show clips, do different music etc.

We are on a journey towards more contemporary styles of worship - the use of Audio Visual helps this. Church@4, Afternoon Worship in Holy Rood and All Saints, and our informal evening worship are all taking us further on that journey.

A Children and Youth Ministry Strategy has been presented to the PCC, prepared by members of the Youth & Children's Work Committee.

The Journey Project has finished and the youth congregation was not established. We are currently working with The Kings Arms on other youth based projects particularly the Unite Group on Monday evenings.

In the next year we have a number of young people who are ready to take on more positions in our worship and church life. We will ask the Youth and Children's Work Committee to further this.

Growing Structures

7. We will develop a rhythm of sustainable and varied services across the parish

- 7.1 the Ministry Team to put forward a suitably sustainable pattern of services across the parish extending to Bentworth, Lasham & Shalden based on the following points:
- 7.2 leadership of services will be by both clergy and lay, men and women with training and support provided by Diocese, Deanery & Parish (eg. BCM courses, LLW & LLM courses)
- 7.3 services will be a reduction in the number of communion services across the parish every Sunday
- 7.4 service and worship styles within the rhythm will be a mixed ecology - there are a broad range permitted and needed - including online, different timings, using varied or no liturgy, in public buildings and people's homes, reflective or active in style etc.
- 7.5 online services, prayers and encouragements will be offered across each month - this maintains and evolves the best of the pandemic experience
- 7.6 not all services will use robes and vestments for clergy and choir - they will be used in appropriate traditional services and in weddings, baptisms and funerals in agreement with the people concerned
- 7.7 all liturgy, language and hymns and songs will be considered carefully for accessibility and using Audio Visual equipment as often as possible
- 7.8 one Sunday sermon subject across all churches to ensure consistency and focus - using series or themes to be published in advance
- 7.9 sermons to be clear on 'What does this tell me about God?' 'What does this tell me about my life with God?' 'What does this mean for me tomorrow morning?'
- 7.10 leading of services, sermons and teaching to include discussion, interviews, video clips and other engaging delivery and participation
- 7.11 there will be an intentional focus toward contemporary styles of worship without losing the best of traditional worship, music and

prayers

The Service Pattern is stable and allowing growth in our congregations across the parish. There are no plans to alter this again in the foreseeable future.

We have reduced the number of communion services with the addition of Morning Worship in St Lawrence and Afternoon Worship in All Saints and Holy Rood. With the reduction in the number of services at St Peter's and All Saints the overall offer of communion services has dropped. This is important for the stability of the service pattern and rotas and for giving a varied diet of worship across the parish.

We hold Morning Prayer daily via Facebook. There will be a Ministry Team conversation about more video encouragements which can be shared midweek.

Clergy and lay leaders are making informed decisions about robing and vestments according to the nature of the service and season of the year and special occasions.

There are consistent themes for preaching across the year which are planned. These are based on Books of the Bible, Biblical themes and the set lectionary readings.

There will be further discussions about how we include others in our leading of worship and preaching. This will help us think about training, encouragement and support using local material and those offered by the Diocese.

8. We will improve and optimise internal and external communications and publicity

8.1 develop an action plan to review, evaluate and put in place a systematic, efficient and transparent process where the parish can let each other and others know plans, arrangements and details of activities, events, meetings etc. - Review Parish Matters, Sunrise, Website, Social media, noticeboards and implement any new available methods

8.2 clarification of roles of Churchwardens and PCC members in cascading information to the wider congregation.

Regular communication is via the website, Parish Matters, social media and the weekly email. In the latter part of 2024 there will be a review of these, especially our website.

9. We will improve the use of our Parish Resources

9.1 overseen by the Finance & Administration Group to review the deployment of the current administration resources and to look towards the appointment of an Operations Manager, to ensure Ministry Team time is clearly used for growth, pastoral care and discipleship and to improve communications and Churchwarden time spent on buildings

9.2 following the pandemic experience of co-operation, All Saints Church to enter a formal agreement with The Butts Church to facilitate their need for space on Sundays and during the week and to increase the kingdom use and capacity of the building. Income generated will help with Parish running costs with The Butts Church contributing heavily to the cost of improving facilities

- 9.3 conversation to be undertaken on the 5-10 year future of St Peter's Church and the use of The Beech Village Hall for some services, activities and events
- 9.4 to continue the conversations about the re-ordering of St Lawrence Church to improve flexibility and sustainability; to serve more fully the need of the whole parish and community
- 9.5 implement a financial strategy and planning to ensure effective use of financial resources - to be overseen by the PCC and Finance and Administration Group
- 9.6 develop and support more training of lay ministry in the parish and wider Deanery so that we relieve pressure on the clergy, strengthen capacity and increase range of outreach

There has been a thorough and robust review of our administration team and office with clear recommendations going forward.

There has also been a new system of financial administration put into place with clear delegations of authority and processes for expenditure

There is a formal agreement for the sharing of All Saints Church with the Butts Church which is due for review and update in autumn 2024.

St Peter's Church is well attended when it has services and fabric work has been undertaken to rectify some of the building issues. There is no need for a review at present but will be kept on the agenda going forward.

It was felt that with other financial considerations for the parish and for St Lawrence Church not to take forward the idea of re-ordering at present. There has been a meeting with the Churchwardens and our Buildings Advisor to look at ideas and process for future engagement with this.

There needs to be a more structured look at lay ministry and the training involved - for PCC discussion in 2025.

The Following Conversations are to be arranged and publicised as appropriate

A Parish conversation to look at congregational attendance figures, what we have experienced in worship during the pandemic and future service patterns - [Done](#)

A Parish Conversation to look at the current parish communications and suggestions for future methods - [For autumn2024/spring 2025](#)

A Parish Conversation on training offered for lay ministries - a presentation from the School of Mission - [For 2025](#)

Those within our parish community with young families - to discuss the pattern of Lighthouse/Church@4 and other ways to engage and encourage faith and relationships - [Done](#)

Those who provide music in our churches - to discuss service patterns, supporting each other, and musical choices in worship - [Ongoing](#)

With ecumenical friends and ministers to discuss a Churches Together forum - [Done](#)

Those who lead small groups and have assisted in the leadership of Alpha, Prayer Course and The Bible Course - to discuss and evaluate existing provision and share experiences and ideas for future groups and programmes - [Done and regularly](#)

Those who would form a focussed re-ordering group for St Lawrence Church with suggestions from Eco Church group - [Further work needed](#)

Those in the All Saints Congregation and other interested parties - to discuss the sharing of the church building with The Butts Church, forming a working group to continue conversations - [Done](#)

Those in the St Peter's Church community and other interested parties - to discuss the 5-10 year possible future of the building and the use of Beech Village Hall for events, activities and worship - [Ongoing](#).

AMM - May 2024