

'With Fresh Eyes' April 2014 St Mary Magdalene



Introduction

Let me begin with a little bit of more recent personal history. I retired as a parish priest five years ago, but continued as Warden of Readers for another two and a half years. I had been appointed to both of these posts in 2003 and had attempted to divide my time fairly between both areas of responsibility, each having an expectation of roughly half my time. Meanwhile, I was also engaged in Theological Education, through the School of Theology and Ministry and as a core member of the teaching team for Methodist Local Preachers in their developing East Midlands Courses.

My retirement as a parish priest in 2009 also enabled me to take on some interesting and special projects, one very dear to my heart being Warden of a small ecumenical Community, the Carmel Community, on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. Being a long-time ecumenist, retirement also gave me the opportunity to become involved in an International Ecumenical Fellowship.

Meanwhile, for a year and a half, during the interregnum at St Luke's Birchwood, I agreed to preside fortnightly at a Sunday Sung Eucharist and lead the adult Confirmation class. I liked this regular contact with a church and congregation, rather than just flying here there and everywhere filling random gaps. At the same time I quite often did the 8.00am Eucharist at Nettleham, but nothing more there.

Which brings me to what happened next. I innocently asked the Bishop whether there might be another parish where I could offer something fairly informal but quite regular, similar to Birchwood; you know, something like a fortnightly Sunday Service, with the odd add on.

The answer came in an invitation to become something rather more formal and somewhat more extensive than I had bargained for in being invited to be the legal Vicar here.

However, I was impressed by the Parish Profile. Clearly a lot of thought had gone into its preparation. And then, when the Dean and Archdeacon introduced me to the Churchwardens, I was impressed again. This is not intended to be flattery. These were people whom I instantly felt I could work with. Well, more than that, it would be a pleasure to work with them.

This first positive experience has led to this day, because the welcome has been widespread, consistent and transparently genuine. I have felt welcomed in a very open and friendly way.

That's why I want this day to be a real affirmation of what this parish stands for: its people, its pastoral care, its mission and its desire to worship God. There is a manifest desire here to serve God and to serve one another. And, It seems to me, that there is a real desire to serve and to do so modestly, without seeking for any reward, in the words of St Ignatius, save that of knowing that we do God's will.

The Day's Structure

Now here's how I propose to structure the time available to us. I am going to divide my observations under several headings and at the end of each section we will break up into groups to discuss issues arising from that section. Now please remember, these are still very early days for me and I am still assimilating a whole host of impressions, stories and observations.

Sometimes I have felt as if events and impressions and possibilities have been rushing at me at a great speed, especially as my introduction to the parish has come during Candlemass, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. So you must forgive

me, if some of my observations are a bit off the mark or still being thought through. But this is an informal sharing, not a version of the PCC. What we discuss here today will, I hope, inform our future thinking, but it is not a decision-making occasion – that's the job of the PCC – but a 'thinking out loud' type of occasion.

By about 12.00, I guess we will need a good break for lunch.

I also want to ask each group to jot down its primary points under each section, so that we can collect comments for future reference.

1. The Church Building

We are at the crossroads: physically, historically, morally and spiritually. This will influence and inform everything we might say under all the other headings. Right from the very beginning we have been reacting to the challenges of our location. Since Roman days this has been a prime site, so prime that when the Normans wanted a cathedral, it had to be on the site of the parish church then serving the community we call Bailgate. So the first parish church was replaced by a great Norman and then Gothic Cathedral, one of the wonders of the medieval world, which still presides over the city in which we live.

We should be proud of this. The cathedral is for the City, the county, the nation and the world. Its vocation is to represent the world wide church of God. It is a universal, a catholic symbol, demonstrated by its size and design. It is awesome and intended to be. Some of its acts of worship are magnificent in terms of scale and quality. This was typified for me by the Holy Saturday Vigil Eucharist with the ceremony of light, baptism, Confirmation and the First Communion of Easter. The whole building from the font to the high altar was fully and most movingly used.

But this raised a real question for the needs of the local community. How does the Church serve the very local community? Lincoln cathedral was not designed to do this. The needs of the people of Bailgate couldn't just be tagged on. Something very specific and local was needed. And so the first church on this specific site was built – it was related to the cathedral, the Bishop and the Dean, but with a specific calling to serve the local community.

This episode in the parish life has been well-illustrated in the cartoons at the back of the church.

So let us look at this church today. It has been a magnificent achievement to reroof the Church and make it weather proof for another hundred years or more. But also really impressive is the tasteful and practical construction of the North Aisle cupboards, which have been such a practical project.

But, as we look round the church, what has been described as 'Bodley's little gem', following the Victorian restoration, is now in need of some real conservation. 130 years of use since Bodley and the replacement of the roof has caused dust to fall and grime to quietly accumulate on the stonework and the decorated panelling. Localised test cleaning has shown just how beautiful the panelling can be with some fairly simple conservation cleaning. Again, the lime washed walls need to be rewashed to enable the Church to shine.

The principle eyeline of the church runs from West to East to focus on the High Altar, behind which is a curtain which has seen much better days. I believe Bodley himself installed it as a temporary measure. Well it now needs either fully refurbishment or tasteful replacement. I have been told that there are other compatible Bodley designs and materials which would be no more expensive to install than an attempt to refurbish the existing curtain.

Talking of eyelines and fresh eyes, I have to confess that my eyes are now quite old and dependent on varifocals to function at all. I find it almost impossible to read even large print Service Booklets at the High Altar and make a strong plea for improved lighting in the chancel, especially focussed on the altar. This would strengthen the visibility of the sanctuary both for the outsider looking in and for the devotional life of the congregation.

Two other aspects of the building:

St Mary Magdalene's is small and intimate, a real blessing and part of our complementary contrast with the cathedral and its role. But we have little storage space and even the imaginatively furnished vestry is asked to do a lot: clergy vestry, sacristy, choir vestry, Sunday School, crèche, library of printed Services, registers etc. So, I was interested to see the plans from some years ago for a mezzanine floor at the West end to provide a meeting room and

perhaps good Sunday School facilities. Done in sound-proofed glass this might answer some problems while retaining light from the West window.

I have also learnt that the organ is in need of major and increasingly urgent overhaul.

The nave itself of course is so very well used, both for Services and for providing hospitality and café facilities, as well as 'Messy Church'.

Do we need to develop a well-costed plan for both conservation of that which is old and heritage and also to enable the development of current and future congregational needs? What are our building and furnishing priorities?

2. Worship

In the parish profile I was given, I read the comment:

I like St Mary's because it is inclusive and non-judgemental. I like the liturgy and the reverence.

Just the other day a young man came into church and told me he was looking at churches. He said he was Anglo-catholic. He asked me what I was. I gently refused to tell him. I have always tried to avoid churchmanship stereo-types and, as a priest of the Church of England, I have always wanted to feel able to minister anywhere, across a fairly broad spectrum. Inclusivity is so important. It does not have to be weak or woolly, but thoughtful, exploratory and seeking to understand.

Good liturgy is also very important. It needs to be carefully prepared and often have a reflective numinous quality, especially sacramental worship. The ministry of the Word also needs some intellectual rigour, a faithful exploration of scripture and a desire to connect with the realities of life.

The pattern of worship here seems to touch much of this. The Sung Eucharist is carefully prepared and main-stream, Choral Evensong is faithful traditional Church of England and Taize is available.

The musical standard here is excellent, with a repertoire of classical church music, which only a few churches in this diocese can attain. There is a real commitment from the choir, under Chris's direction, which is both pastoral as

well as musical. Not all good church choirs have this quality of pastoral care and sense of community. The choir is a caring as well as a musical place to be.

The Sundays, however, are complemented by a commitment to open the church for daily Evening Prayer as well as the weekly Wednesday Eucharist. It is so important that this Church continues as a place of prayer and sanctuary – especially when there are only one or two or three gathered together in Jesus' name. Such a persistent quiet offering of prayer steeped this building with a sense of spiritual presence, recognised by many visitors.

But can we extend our range without overstretching ourselves?

For example, I notice that the ministry of healing has been offered quarterly in the past. Already Margaret Saunders and I have discussed this and we are looking ahead to 2015 to offer a series of sermons on the Ministry of Healing, to be followed by a Sunday Sung Eucharist in St Luke's tide, that's October, when the laying on of hands with prayer and anointing will be offered.

Again, the parish profile suggested that

We need to ask ourselves if our worship could be more varied; if we could introduce some more modern hymns.

Without damaging our strong musical and preaching tradition, perhaps we could introduce some strategically planned 'All Age' Sung Eucharists, for example at Epiphany, Harvest, St Mary Magdalene's Day, Advent Sunday or for 5th Sundays? We have talented leaders for our Sunday School and 'Messy Church' work. 'All Age' can be Eucharistic, with thoughtfully designed Ministry of the Word. It does not have to be 'childish', and can explore contemporary settings and hymnody.

Something we might consider strategically extending is the form of Service we used on Passion Sunday evening as a Lenten and Passiontide meditation in which beautiful and powerful seasonal music was interwoven with the Reading of the Passion of our Lord according to St Matthew. Such a themed Service can draw upon our musical tradition at its best, complementing an eloquently focussed reading of the scriptures and carefully prepared devotional prayer.

And would the prayer life of the parish be extended and strengthened by occasional quiet days or pilgrimages? Metheringham, Stixwold and Southwell are not far away and there are many pilgrim destinations at home and abroad.

Again, do we limit our Christian nurture groups to Lent, or is there likely to be a desire for more house groups or prayer groups, regularly or occasionally?

3. Structures

Sometimes Parish structures and elected offices can be heavy-handed and too often about status. A Canadian friend of mine, a former curate, once said about the human pillars of the church, that 'while holding up the roof, they can also blot out the light'.

Frankly, I think we are very fortunate here. I do not see that possessiveness of posts and titles or a desire for status, which you find in some parishes. I do see a great many examples of service willingly given. Long may this be the case. We do not have solitary churchwardens, but a churchwardens' team. We do not have a solitary treasurer, but a finance team. We do not have independent lay ministers, but a ministry team and so on.

It seems to me that a characteristic of this team approach is to quietly get on with the job of offering service and encouraging others rather than running exclusive franchises. The PCC, in partnership with the incumbent, is the elected forum to help bring all this activity together and make and endorse decisions as appropriate.

Teamwork is at the heart of my approach to ministry with a willingness to recognise and respect the gifts and contribution of others and a readiness to let people get on with what they can do.

I am delighted to find that I am not a solitary Ordained Minister. It means so much to me that Brian and Margaret Saunders are able to regularly work with me and that Paul Paynton gives consistent support. I am also very much aware of the support of Ted Barlow, not only in being available from time to time to take Sunday Service, but also in his quietly supportive work as a Church-sitter.

And as a former Diocesan Warden of Readers, I am delighted to have Clare as a Reader in training and then there is Margaret Ford, a legend in her own lifetime, whom I believe is currently in Egypt, being true to her missionary vocation and keeping us aware of the world-wide church. It also gives me great joy to have Geoff Harris close by, a colleague in the School of Ministry and Theology.

It is not my intention to change the existing teams for a while. What is more important to me is to concentrate on encouraging Christian discipleship from within the whole congregation.

I have been really moved to hear the stories of so many in our congregation who are quietly, but persistently, carrying out their Christian discipleship, often quite anonymously, and again, without seeking any reward. Engagement with such charitable city-wide activity like The Community Larder comes to mind or being a hospital visitor.

We need to support, encourage and trust each other in our discipleship, quiet witness and the Service of others. In fact, persistent prayer for each other as we engage in our own personal forms of vocation and discipleship is so important.

How might we strengthen and encourage our calling to Christian discipleship?
How might we support each other in it?

4. Heritage

We have already referred to our location at the crossroads. Our crossroads run north, south east and west. Over the next few years our East/west pathway will be very important: the massive work to restore the castle and focus on Magna Carta lies to the west, huge plans to develop the scope and resourcing of the cathedral lie to the East. To go from one to the other you have to pass St Mary Magdalene. We are part of the tourist and heritage provision. We are a small piece in the great heritage jigsaw, but we are an important and compatible one.

We have a long history as well as our significant part in the Gothic Revival Movement in Victorian England. As we look to future capital projects or to developing our heritage resources, we need to ensure that our plans fit in well with the plans of the castle and cathedral. Our piece must fit into the jigsaw, both in what we can contribute and in any applications we might make for capital funding and grants. We must fit into a mainstream partnership to avoid being simply ignored. Shirley is already carrying out strong well-informed pioneering work here and making key strategic contacts.

I believe that the east/west line is the most important one for us, but we need to keep half an eye to the North/south heritage pathway down Steep Hill to the ancient churches downhill and their heritage aspirations. I believe we might need to do this without necessarily becoming involved in their parish life or style of being church.

So, how do you see us developing our heritage role?

5. Outreach to Bailgate

Only five members of our Electoral Roll live in the parish boundaries. We are a gathered church, attracting people for example, through our style of worship, our non-judgemental openness, our encouragement of those wishing to consider marriage and our music.

And yet, as we have already observed, we are located at the crossroads at the heart of historic Lincoln and in the midst of one of the most attractive shopping streets in Lincolnshire: Bailgate and the upper parts of the Steep. Thousands of visitors walk past our front door and, I am delighted to observe, we have a relationship with the businesses and activity around us.

For the Christmas Market, farmers market days, and a variety of fairs and outside activities in Castle Square, we are there and we are open. I have been hugely impressed by the number of volunteers and the level of hospitality offered by our church members to sustain this open-door policy. It is a real achievement; as is the church sitting hour every day.

Just think of the amount of consistent volunteering that goes into making this possible. We are not just an eclectic congregation who come here for an hour or two on Sundays for our own spiritual well-being and then go away again, we open our doors and the soul of this place to the outside world.

Furthermore, I was delighted when Shirley invited me to attend the Bailgate Guild meetings and it has soon become obvious to me that Bailgate businesses and organisations value the Church's involvement. Clearly, we are their parish church and they want us to engage with them.

And it is good to note that through Patrick we have direct links with the Assembly Rooms and Richard has been involved with the Guild.

And as well as being a sanctuary and a parish church to pray for Bailgate and its businesses and visitors, we also offer a series of concerts and events in a variety of styles, as an act of Service to the common life of our community and as an act of outreach.

Is there more we could do to strengthen this outreach and links with local life? In what ways can we be a spiritual presence and pray for the life of our part of the city? Are there other occasions than Advent when we can invite in our neighbours to an act of worship or other Christian event?

6. The Residential Parish

Here again, the issue comes into play that we are a gathered Church. We do not spontaneously meet each other on the parish street never mind our parish neighbours. And how might I know them and they know me or the Church? I ask myself the question, who are my parish neighbours?

The thought has occurred to me: do we really know our parish boundaries and what sort of residents we have? A few weeks ago I asked Shirley whether she might walk the parish boundaries with me. And she suggested it might be even better if a number of us did this together; a sort of Rogation-tide beating of the bands. Allegedly, there are 900-1000 residents in the parish.

Now I know that parish boundaries do not always make sense in cities, especially in the old part of cities, where population and residential housing

patterns have changed radically over the years. And I know that flats over shops might provide accommodation to a largely student or transient population, unlikely ever to make a medium to long term contact with a parish church.

And yet, to what degree have we ever tried to discover who lives in our parish and whether and how contact might be made?

Just a few days ago Dr Geoff Harris had a little group of BA ministry students surveying our parish. The question he posed, if I remember rightly, was,

‘If you were the new Vicar of St Mary Magdalene, what would be your five year plan’? I was very impressed by their work and the seriousness with which they undertook it.

Two issues stood out for me, one of which is directly relevant to this section. That is, what is your ministry to Westgate School?

All the students raised this question as an immediate and vitally important issue, something to be tackled as an early mission priority. It evoked in me many memories of years of taking school assemblies, going into class rooms, encouraging curriculum visits into church, and serving on Governing bodies. I had always been just as welcome in County Schools as in Church Schools and knew the students were raising an authentic issue for our attention.

But, especially if you are welcomed in, you cannot commit to schools for the short term and the school link cannot be dependent on the future work of a 70 year old Vicar. So, can we do it? Who might make up a little team with the Vicar to sustain the work into the medium future at least? Who has the enthusiasm, skill and or qualification to do this effectively?

So the question remains:

Who are our resident neighbours and how do we make contact with them and minister to them?

7. Communication

The other outstanding issue raised by the students, at least for me, was that of communication. They recognised that much often high quality good work in all the areas we have discussed so far is taking place. They were very complimentary about us and all of them had warm memories of their previous contact with us and the warm welcome they had received here. They felt that the new cohorts of students were missing out by not having a link with us anymore.

But, having accepted that there is an amazing amount of good activity here, especially for the size of our building and congregation, they still posed the question, 'How does anyone know?'

One had dropped in on 'Messy Church' and thought it wonderfully prepared and very skilled, yet there were only three children and six adults. How do we communicate such an event.

Others were impressed by the list and variety of concerts, but how are they communicated? Who knows what is going on? Wouldn't the audiences be much bigger with more extensive communications?

They asked us to consider our use of notice boards and to examine the eye-catching clarity and size of the information displayed at the Church. Do we use the Post Office and Tourist Information Office to advertise what we have to offer? Or our contact with Bailgate businesses?

They suggested that we might give a free copy of the parish magazine to every residential parishioner and to use it to advertise our events to none churchgoers as well as members of the congregation?

By the time they had finished their presentations, as well as being impressed, I was also beginning to feel a bit exhausted. There is only so much that any of us can do. Priorities have to be made and we must not burn out our most willing and available workers, or make those who have busy and demanding lives feel guilty or over-burdened by Christian discipleship; or value unremitting action over prayer.

Nevertheless, Communication is important.

The Bishop's Letter

In Crosslinks there is a reference to the formation of Mission Communities, informal groupings around the Diocese. Lindsay, our PCC Secretary, and I received a letter from the Bishop at the end of March in which he said this:

A mission community is simply an informal grouping of neighbouring parishes to enable them to build and develop faithful communities by sharing knowledge, skills, ideas and resources. It is not constrained by benefice, deanery or archdeaconry boundaries. For some of you it may be that things are fine as they are and there is no need to change the current arrangement.

I would like every PCC in the Diocese to hold a meeting between Easter and 14 July this year to begin to discuss how they might look at working creatively and collaboratively with neighbouring parishes by forming a mission community ... a pack of information will be coming to you towards the end of April to help you ...

We are fortunate in having Rachel as Churchwarden because this is a project she is working on with the Archdeacon of Lincoln.

Obviously we will have to look at this as a PCC when the pack arrives, but we already have links.

Through the good offices of Margaret Ford, we have a link with Bishop Johnson in Uganda; and through Chris and the choir we have a link with a parish in Cumbria. It would be good to keep these links alive and find appropriate ways of doing so.

We also have the potential to restore links with the School of Ministry and Theology. The students valued the link and we have a much valued link through Geoff Harris, which is also ecumenical as well as educational. Much depends on decisions about the future of the School of Ministry, and perhaps its location also, but in principle, this might still be on our agenda.

As we have already considered, we have a mission and ministry to Bailgate. But we are not the only Christian Church here. At the other end is Bailgate

Methodist Church. Might there be the possibility of exploring a mission community with our Methodist neighbours?

Again, from our Crossroads perspective, do we look North, South, East or West? Where are our potential pastoral and neighbourhood links? Where are our best heritage links? They may not be the same.

Then again, our openness and inclusivity might not align so well with more exclusive or dogmatic congregations, whether they be of a more Catholic or evangelical persuasion. There is a new incumbent at St Nicholas, a University chaplaincy at BGU and a newish Methodist Minister at Bailgate.

With whom might we consider exploring mission communities?

St Mary Magdalene, Lincoln With Fresh Eyes Programme 26/04/14

All timings are very approximate and flexible

10.00am Arrival and refreshments

10.15am Introduction and the programme's structure

10.30am The Church Building

Do we need to develop a well-costed plan for both the conservation of that which is old and heritage; and also to enable the development of current and future congregational needs? What are our building and furnishing priorities? What would you like to see happen next?

Worship

How would you like to see the worshipping life of our church develop? What might help our spiritual nurture and growth? What learning programmes or group work might help this process?

Parish Structures

How might we strengthen and encourage our calling to Christian discipleship? How might we support each other in it? How might we strengthen or develop parish structures to support our discipleship?

Heritage

How do you see us developing our heritage role?

12.00am Shared Lunch

12.30am Outreach to Bailgate

Is there more we could do to strengthen this outreach and links with local life? In what ways can we be a spiritual presence and pray for the life of our part of the city? Are there other occasions than Advent when we can invite in our neighbours to an act of worship or other Christian event?

1.00pm The Residential Parish

Who are our resident neighbours and how do we make contact with them and minister to them? Do we have the capacity and/or opportunity to engage with Westgate School?

Communication

How do we communicate what we do to a wider audience than our church members? In what way might we develop effective communications?

The Bishop's Letter

With whom might we consider exploring mission communities? How do we strengthen the links we already have?

1.50pm

Concluding Prayers

Teach us good Lord,
to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost;
to fight and not to heed the wounds;
to toil and not to seek for rest;
to labour and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do your will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Ignatius of Loyola

Diocesan Prayer

Almighty God,
source of our hope and all good things;
you call us in love to share in the work of creation
in making all things new.

**Bless our diocese:
may we be faithful in our worship;
confident in our discipleship;
and joyful in our service;**

That through us,
the world may catch a glimpse of the love you have for each one of us,
made known to us in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

The Grace

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Brief Notes Collated from the Discussion Groups of 26 April 2014

1. Buildings

There is a need for and encouragement of

- a west end mezzanine room, toilet and possibly a lift or spiral staircase to mezzanine level. The use of sound proof glass.
- Space for Sunday school, but also for community use and mission.
- well-focussed grant applications, locally and nationally (but note: local businesses often struggle)
- Sandra's research on the Bodley materials
- A plan for the lighting
- The consideration of using contract cleaners
- Walls lime-washing (see Patrick) and lamp shades cleaning.
- Affirmation of tasks listed in original presentation
- Engage with Richard's fund raising ideas
- A Friends of St Mary Magdalene's organisation

2. Worship

There is a need or a desire for

- fellowship groups as well as courses, with space to discuss difficult theological questions. House groups can be mutually supportive
- Quiet days and the restarting of Lectio Divina

- Learning about liturgy & seasons; could involve Sunday school reporting back to congregation
- The resumption of Healing services in 2014
- All-age Services on special occasions
- Palm Sunday Procession from St Paul in the Bail
- Prayer time in the chancel after 11.00am Service?
- Pilgrimage (eg to Lindisfarne)

There is a need to

- Retain a balance between old and new, without isolating the new, while preserving musical integrity.
- Explore newer editions of hymn books and introduce some newer hymns into all eucharists, not just in 'all-age' worship, so that everyone might experience them
- Start services on time, leaving time for fellowship at the end. While appreciating the choir, perhaps fewer anthems and more space for silence after communion.
- Involve children as much as possible in the liturgy, without dropping standards or abandoning tradition eg giving out books, helping with offertory
- Retain intellectual rigour and musical satisfaction
- Avoid Sunday version of school assembly
- As an 'all-age' congregation, is Sunday morning 'All-age'?
- Note that many choose this Church because of the quality of the music and preaching
- Develop an occasional music group; or occasionally teach the children to be sung during the service

3. Parish Structures

Needed and noted

- System for noting who is ill/in hospital and for visiting the sick. Pastoral groups of about 6 in each group was suggested with a named contact person, not just clergy/ministry team, eg. as in Methodist pastoral model.
- A method of gathering information of need for visits and prayer
- Teams work well
- System for following up funerals, weddings and baptism families.
- Perhaps some sermons on hospitality, welcoming and pastoral care?
- An emailed newsletter? The development of more more communication and publicity methods
- A prayer cascade? And structured opportunities to pray for each other
- A method of keeping people on the periphery connected and informed.
- Social activities, meals out etc.

- A named treasurer
- Good communication between teams and groups, while recognising their quality.
- Lunching together after Sunday Service (some go home to eat alone)
- Invitations to eat in each other's homes
- 'pub' fellowship after Services, often a pastoral opportunity
- People who might value being picked up to come to church

4. Heritage and Outreach

Continue to develop or consider

- Open church policy (CCTV/alarms)
- One room as work space
- If room at West end, someone working in it some of the time, also keeping church open for longer
- Exhibitions in church with improved historical pamphlet/s
- A ready supply of information leaflets available to Church sitters
- Church sitting hours might be better later in day
- Information to be made readily available in Tourist Information Centre
- Children's trail quiz
- Churches' trail information
- Recruiting more church sitters from the Volunteering Bureau
- Information about prayer near votive candle stand
- Urban retreat and city pilgrimage possibilities
- The south door project?
- Make more of Mary Magdalene – booklet?
- Leaflet for tour of the church
- Ethos of Christian worship and witness – to be reflected in booklet/pamphlet?
- Lectures on heritage and faith

5. Outreach to Bailgate

To continue or arrange

- Teas and coffees at times when stall holders are in Castle Square
- And enquire whether they would like us to do anything
- An annual Service for shops and businesses
- A Guild Service
- Visits to businesses
- The ringing of the church bell
- Early invitation to Patronal Festival – leaflet drop

- Importance of notice board
- Weekly café, if we have new room
- Invite other charities to hold Saturday coffee mornings for their funds while extending openness and availability

6. Outreach to Parish

With a partly transient population

- Need to cement some commitment
- Leaflet all houses in parish
- Write to Westgate School, look at our existing link people. (St Peter's in Eastgate and EBS still link with school. Input from Andy Housham of the Joy Foundation – recently started)
- Beat the bounds (note transient population of students, migrant workers and those working in hotel and catering, above Bailgate shops, West Bight and Eastgate)
- Carol singing (Willis Close)
- Christian Aid week provides an opportunity
- Continue Christmas Nativity link
- More publicity for Messy Church
- Open church for Light Up A Life Festival (St Barnabas)
- All Souls Service. Invitation cards/letters to the bereaved
- 8.30am Morning Prayer time and rota?
- Is Bail Hostel (Mill Road/Yarborough Road) in parish?

7. Communications

Continue or produce or utilise or publish

- A flier of seasonal events eg for Christmas and Easter
- A circulated newsletter
- The website: www.stmarym.org.uk
- Facebook (Nel)
- Twitter (Rachel @linkstmarymag)
- Publicity in the Echo
- Concerts in Music Link
- Events in Churches Together
- Parish Magazine on the website? What would be the implications?
- A greater and wider readiness to submit information and articles for parish magazine
- Edited reports from PCC in parish magazine
- Publicity in the Bailgate Independent magazine

- Radio links with Lincs FM

8. Bishop's Letter on Mission Communities

It seemed appropriate to informally introduce the Letter to begin the discussion process

- Are Mission communities more relevant to groups of country parishes?
- Overseas link with Uganda (Bishop Johnson) and a once very strong link with Mozambique
- How far are we aware of wider world?
- Possibly develop links with Bailgate Methodist Church
- Engage in discussions with St Nicholas Parish
- Re-visit links with School of Ministry and Theology
- Make it more explicit that we are an inclusive church with a tree with branches highlighting all the types and groups to be included
- Current links with Julian Group, Women's World day of Prayer, and Churches Together e- notice Board
- St Mary Magdalene's to be made available as a prayer centre for groups.
- Develop an awareness of what the churches are doing already and the links we already have with hospital chaplaincy etc
- Need for sustainable structures to make mission communities possible.

Post Script

I have attempted to list faithfully the wide range of comments noted on the day. Clearly there is a variety of views and areas for ongoing discussion and reflection. Some of the comments might easily have been listed under several headings and some of the proposals are already in process.

We might informally refer to the list of comments and responses and the original presentation as we continue to develop our parish life, so that the shared insights, offered with real thoughtfulness and good humour will not be lost. 27 people took part in the consultation day. Anyone interested is welcome to read and share this document.

Alex Whitehead

June 6th 2014