

Outreach Group Report for APCM on 24th April 2016

Members

Chair - Roger Sudbury. Ex officio PCC members – Revd Derek Hinge, Phil Smith, Rosemary Thomson

Other members – Steve Dale, Clair Sarles, Gary Jones, Gailie Anderson, Gill Dean

According to our Terms of Reference, the function of the Outreach Group is to focus the Church's attention on its vision to be a welcoming and transforming community of people and its mission to widen our service of God through greater outreach, compassion, care and contact for those outside the Church, in particular -

- By ensuring that the message the Church projects is positive and welcoming;
- By encouraging Church people to find ways of communicating the gospel of love and grace and service into the communities in which they live and work;
- By communicating internally and externally the function and activities of the Church, and
- By being the contact point for links to external Christian and other organisations.

The Group has dealt with or been involved in the following matters over the last year.

Welcome Desk – We have revised and expanded the duties of those who staff the welcome desk, so that a 'welcomer' is available to greet newcomers before the 10am service and then operates the desk after the service. As part of this change, a number of people who have served on the welcome desk rota for several years retired from duties, and we thank them very much for their service. We have recruited some more volunteers, but others are always welcome. As we say every year, it is everyone's responsibility to keep a look out for visitors and newcomers and to make them feel welcome (we are the hosts not the guests). There is a strong temptation just to talk to our friends or to try and catch up with people we need to see. Ideally visitors and newcomers should be taken to the welcome desk so that they can complete a welcome card with their contact details, and then taken over to the WCC for coffee.

Literature – We have added a series of leaflets about aspects of Christian faith and life to our Welcome literature, and we continue to maintain the existing range of other materials aimed at informing visitors about the Church's life.

Website – Following a substantial amount of planning and preparation work by our webmaster Steve Dale, the Church website was completely relaunched in November 2015. The new site is much more attractive, and easier to use from the point of view of adding content, and provides better integration with our social media pages on Facebook and Twitter. We express our huge thanks to Steve for all that work. We are also investigating the possibility of a Stage 2 development, which might allow us to use the site as a more integrated part of our daily and weekly church life (e.g. members would be able to sign up for an account which would provide secure access to a 'members only' part of the site). We have started to develop both a 'wish-list' of what such a site could do, and also a draft Specification for the development. This has also been added to the Church's MAP objectives.

Email Newsletter – Katharine in the Parish Office continues to send out a copy of the newsletter by email to a distribution list of church members. If you would like to be added to the distribution, please let Katharine have your email address.

Sermons – We continue the practice of recording Sunday morning sermons and posting these in audio format on the website so that people who may have missed hearing them or want to hear them again can listen to them at home.

Porch Noticeboards – We have added two additional noticeboards to the north porch which enables us to have a more ordered display of general information about the Church and to have separate boards for forthcoming events and for official notices.

Other notice / display boards – After some considerable efforts, we have installed a new display case outside the south porch, which is now used to display posters advertising forthcoming church events and concerts. We have also installed some noticeboards in the Charnley Hall. These are currently being used to display information from the Charities Support Group and from St Michaels School. We are also investigating improvements to the signage for the WCC / Charnley Hall.

Elmhurst – Over the last year, we continued to run the monthly service at Elmhurst Care Home on the second Sunday of each month, alternating with the Pastoral Group, but declining numbers and a difficulty in getting support from the staff led to us review the position and (at time of writing this report) it seems that we should cease having a Sunday event.

Press coverage – We try to monitor press coverage relating to news about St Michael's and the other churches and about the School. Copies are kept in a file and also posted online.

Roger Sudbury – 04 March 2016